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CAMEOS OF INDIAN CRIME

POLICE AND CRIME IN INDIA

By Sir EDMUND C. COX, Bart.

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With Twenty-eight Illustrations

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A BIJAPUR CHAPPARBAND.

Frontispiece.]

CAMEOS OF INDIAN CRIME

BY

H. HERVEY

LONDON
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PREFACE

THIRTY-FIVE years of an adult life passed in India, for the most part in a branch of the Government Service which has thrown me into contact with a heterogeneous people, not only in cities and towns where the Western exotic is a familiar figure, but also in remote villages and jungles where the sahib is well-nigh unknown, have given me many opportunities of becoming familiar with the character and habits of the natives by ingratiating myself with them, conversing with them in their own tongues, and assimilating myself with their inner life. I can now, therefore, with confidence call upon my store of reminiscences, and frame these chapters in the full hope that they will prove agreeable and perhaps instructive reading to those who are interested in that "Land of Regrets," that home of "The Pagoda Tree," commonly called "India."

H. J. A. HERVEY.

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CAMEOS OF INDIAN CRIME

CHAPTER I

MURDER

In India the incentives to murder are as manifold as in other parts of the world : the same human passions prevail, and man is equally their slave under eastern skies as he is anywhere else. The leading motives to the crime—according to the frequency of its occurrence—may be put down to (1) Connubial infidelity, (2) greed of gain, (3) revenge, and (4) temporary insanity, owing to intoxicants or drugs.

Offences against connubial fidelity are the most common causes of murder in India, especially among the Hindus (Hindoos), the disparity in age between husband and wife being a potent factor. A man of five-and-twenty is betrothed to a child of six ; they see very little of each other till the latter attains to puberty, say, at fourteen, by which time the man is over thirty, and has become blasé. Natives of both sexes age very soon, and when the marriage is consummated the child-wife of fourteen finds herself mated to a husband more than double her own years. As a rule, the man does not take his bride to a home of their own, but to his parents'

abode, where the girl has at once to turn to, relieve her mother-in-law of all the household drudgery, and subject herself to the old couple without a murmur. The husband goes out to his work; he returns in the evening, bathes at the well, and almost *in puris naturalibus* he sings out for his dinner, which it is the wife's especial business to prepare; and woe betide her if the meal is not ready, or not to her lord's liking. She is not permitted to eat while he eats, and usually squats in the background, in doubt and anxiety, fearing lest he should find fault with her culinary efforts. The first shortcoming in this respect may be visited with a good talking to, in which the parents-in-law join, but a repetition of the offence is punished by an application of the stick—a measure applauded and approved of by the old people. So it goes on; the girl becomes hardened by constant ill-usage, and there being no sentiment—as we understand the term—on either side, the chances of reconciliation are remote. Terence's saying—"Amantium irae amoris redintegratio est"—has no meaning for the "mild Hindu." She manages, however, to profit by the correction, and in course of time gets into the way of discharging her duties to the satisfaction of all parties. But lo you! the devil has entered into her, and she resolves to kick over the traces. She now contrives to acquire more time to herself; she goes out, mingles with the other girls of the village, and smarting under the sense of her unhappy lot at home, she looks around for some one to console her. She meets a young fellow more of her own

age ; she is seen talking to him ; the mother-in-law hears of it, who, sufficiently wise in the ways of her sex, divines the truth, and knowing that taxing the girl with her conduct would be of no avail, she informs her son. Enraged though he is, he will take no immediate action till he catches his wife *in flagranti delicto*. He dissembles ; he lies in wait, watches, and — succeeds, when, curiously enough to our ideas, he does not wreak his spleen on the Lothario. He allows him to escape, while the stab of a knife, the blow of a club—usually the household rice-pounder—or a constriction of the throat settles his erring wife for all time. The neighbours, on learning of the provocation, say she deserved her fate, and the homicide has their sympathy ; but the law of the "dominant alien" must be vindicated. The police take up the matter ; the murderer is hunted down and arrested ; he is hauled before the session judge ; the judge pronounces sentence, delivers him to the officer, and the officer hangs him. If it is the other way about, and the woman is the aggrieved party, she does one of two things : she either raises a scene by tearing her hair, and shriekingly proclaiming her wrongs to the whole village, or she also dissembles, and, strangely again, she does not vent her ire on the other woman—she reserves it for her peccant spouse. Pretending to think nothing about it, she decks herself out in her best *sardi* (*sadi*) or cloth, puts jessamine flowers in her hair, anoints her person with spikenard very precious, cooks a particularly tasty meal, lays herself out to be pleasant on the husband's return home, and when

he has dined, she mysteriously produces some arrack, which she tells him she has smuggled in unknown to the old people. Nothing loth, the husband quaffs the fiery spirit and falls into a heavy sleep, whereupon she takes some sharp-pointed instrument, previously prepared, and straightway prods him to the heart. The man dies with scarcely a struggle ; she steals out, and either goes to her parental home, or takes refuge with some friend. Whichever it is, the murder is soon discovered. She is speedily run to earth ; the village authorities are notified ; the police come in, take the girl to the lock-up, and in due course she is sentenced to the gallows.

With regard to murder for greed of gain, I will give a curious example that occurred in Scinde. A *dallal* or dealer came to view the maturing wheat crops of two growers named A and B, whose fields lay contiguous, and offered to purchase A's crop for so much, and B's for so much less. This B had a lien on A's land in the event of the latter's death, B being legal inheritor. Finding that A would receive much more than he would from the *dallal*, B's cupidity was fired, and thinking that the easiest method to "yank" the lot would be to put an end to A, he murdered him that very night, suffocating the unfortunate fellow in his sleep, and making it look as if he met with a natural death. There was no regular inquiry. The *kârdâr* or village headman held a sort of investigation, and I suppose made a report to higher authority, but as no Government medical officer was available to certify the real cause of death,

a verdict was returned that A had died in his sleep. I happened to be camping near that village at the time, and heard the *jutths* (camel-owners), of whom the population was mainly composed, openly deriding the decision, alleging that it was a clear case of murder. When I again passed through that village, I saw B tilling his land, so, concluding that the matter had been settled, I said nothing about the incident when I returned to headquarters.

In India the well-to-do Hindus have a custom of bedecking their children with valuable ornaments, and it is a common sight to see veritable toddlers of both sexes engaged in mud-pie-making in the village street wearing trinkets representing anything from a rupee or two to as many hundreds. Well, some necessitous wretch comes along and notes a chubby mite, innocent of all clothing, but with gold bangles on his wrists. The sight makes the loafer's mouth water; the devil is by to tempt him, and he determines to get those bangles at any cost. First, though, to ascertain if they are real gold, the fellow seats himself on the *pyal* or stoep of the house before which the child is playing, and by making himself agreeable to the little creature, soon has an opportunity of judging the quality of the articles he hankers after. If they are sham, our friend leaves the wearer severely alone; if they are of gold, he loiters about, even for hours, and should the favourable moment come, he just whisks up that child, smothers its cries, steals away, either to a neighbouring thicket or empty hut,

strangles the little one, snatches off the ornaments, drops the tiny corpse into the nearest well or ditch, and decamps. If traced, the murderer will be hanged ; if he escapes detection, he will wait till the affair has blown over, and then repeat the performance in some other quarter, peradventure till he is ultimately apprehended, or succeeds in evading the law altogether.

Revenge is answerable for many murders in India. If a man informs against another, and gets this other into trouble or pecuniary loss, the *lex talionis* is almost sure to follow. If a man insults another by uncomplimentary allusions to the chastity of his female relatives, such affront very likely leads to bloodshed. A certain official, Mr. N——, had some urgent returns to submit which had been called for by wire. Mr. N—— and his entire staff worked at high pressure, and to encourage two of his best clerks, C and D—who were engaged each on some important statistics—he promised promotion to him who would finish first. D, seeing his chance, threw every obstacle in C's way, with the result that he—D—took up his completed work before C was half through, whereupon Mr. N—— told D that he would be put in orders for a step on the following day. Next morning D was discovered with his throat cut, while C had made himself scarce ; but he was eventually arrested, when he owned to having killed D for wresting the prize from him in the manner described. In consideration of grave provocation, C escaped the gallows, and was sentenced to a long term of penal servitude.

Temporary insanity, especially under the influence of intoxication or drug-taking, is another fruitful source of murder, which is generally as revolting as the motive is unaccountable. Some years ago the General commanding at Madras visited Pallaveram, fourteen miles inland, to inspect the three native infantry regiments lying there, and in the course of the review he had the brigade out one evening for firing at the ranges, each man being furnished with six rounds of ball ammunition. The three corps under the Brigadier were drawn up in line, one, with a rifle company under Lieutenant K——, on the extreme left. The firing commenced, and proceeded in the usual manner, but by the time the fourth round had been expended darkness began to gather, and the General ordered them to fire the two remaining rounds—one by subdivisions, the other by companies. The waning light, impatience to get home, and various other reasons caused the men to grow unsteady, especially those of the rifle company, and K—— had occasion to reprimand a *havildar* or sergeant named Imam Ali, who was particularly insubordinate, and gave his officer an insolent reply; so K—— reported the fact to the colonel, who directed that the *havildar* be brought before him the next day at orderly hour. The firing over, the brigade broke into column of sections preparatory to going to quarters, and as it had become so late, the usual precautionary measure of discharging all muskets remaining loaded previous to leaving the ground was overlooked;

the Brigadier either thought there was no time, or forgot all about it. The General drove away in his carriage, and the Brigadier gave the word to march at ease, he himself sitting his horse at an angle of the road where the troops wheeled on towards the cantonments. Suddenly there was a shot fired, and the Brigadier was seen to fall to the ground: he had been struck down from his horse! The momentary deathlike silence was followed by an uproar; there ensued a scuffle and commotion in the rifle company, attended by shouts of "Hold him fast!" "Disarm him!" "Secure the villain!" and so forth, both in English and vernacular. The whole force was halted; a panic pervaded over all; officers rushed to the stricken Brigadier, and the name of Imam Ali flew from mouth to mouth as the man who had fired that shot. He struggled violently on being seized, but when disarmed ceased from further resistance, while continuing to launch the vilest abuse on his comrades and the European officers alike. The Brigadier was carried to his house, and on being told who had shot him he murmured, "What harm have I done the man that he should want to kill me?"

The wound was mortal; medical examination showed that the ball had traversed the stomach and struck the spine, making a great hole on each side. The Brigadier lingered for a few hours and then expired. Thus was a smart officer and kind-hearted gentleman done to death by an assassin for no apparent cause whatever. The murderer was manacled, and con-

fined in a cell, to be kept there till his trial. When first thrust into the cell he behaved in a most frantic manner, throwing himself about, gnashing his teeth, and abusing every one in the most shocking manner. He worked himself into such a fury that there was no use in attempting to quiet him. It turned out, from information given by his comrades, that for the whole of that day Imam Ali had been eating opium—a drug that he had lately taken to. This fact, added to the excitement of the inspection, and, above all, resentment for the censure he had received from K——, together with the prospect of appearing before the colonel at orderly room on the morrow, had maddened the man, and he was quite unaware of what he had done. That he did not intend to fire at the Brigadier was borne out the following day, for when the effects of the opium had worn off, and they told him that he had killed the Brigadier, he expressed the keenest regret, not for the crime itself, but for having made a victim of the wrong man. Who it was he meant to kill never transpired.

The day following the tragedy the Brigadier's remains were taken to Madras for burial in the cathedral. The prisoner was summarily tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death. Punishment for an outrage of this description must speedily attend the perpetration, so as to impress the sepoys' minds while both deed and penalty are fresh in their recollections. The execution, therefore, was ordered to be carried out at once, on the spot of the crime, in the presence of

the whole brigade, and that the body of the murderer be conveyed to the summit of a hillock overlooking the fatal corner, and there hung in a huge iron cage, suspended to a timber tripod till the skeleton fell to pieces.

In connection with the above incident, it may not be out of place to furnish an amusing though somewhat gruesome sequel to the tragedy. Recently attached to one of the Pallaveram regiments was a young officer named C——, who had developed a taste for phrenology. He enjoyed ample private means, and by dint of spending money had secured several heads for examination and study. But these were heads of ordinary natives, and he wanted craniums with "bumps" that denoted certain abnormal proclivities of the brains they had once covered. He longed to acquire a murderer's skull, the homicidal protuberance on which, he asserted, would form a most interesting subject for study and contemplation. Hitherto all his efforts in procuring one had failed. He sounded the jail people whenever they hanged a murderer, offering a large sum for just the head. No; the officials—from the officer in charge down to the hangman—were not to be tempted. Therefore, when this military execution took place, C—— witnessed the hanging and suspending of the corpse in the cage, and further ascertained that the said cage door had no lock; he resolved to steal the murderer's skull. Waiting for a dark night, and carrying a light ladder, he stole up to the knoll: the ladder proved too short, so he proceeded to lower the cage by easing off the guy

ropes that held it in position. This step resulted in giving play to the cage, which, swung by the night wind, emitted what sounded to C—— like a groan, but, as a matter of fact, it was only the grating of the rusty chain by which the cage hung to the tripod. Anyhow, the sound so worked on poor C——'s superstitious fears that, dropping the ladder, he fled wildly back to cantonments, yelling at the top of his voice that Imam Ali's ghost was after him, and rousing the whole garrison in alarm—but to have a good laugh at him when the truth became known. Ultimately, when the cage was taken down, and the remains removed to be burnt, C—— succeeded in securing that much-coveted caput—for a consideration.

CHAPTER II

HOUSE ROBBERY

THERE is nothing formidable in the appearance of the Indian housebreaker. He bears no resemblance to his congener of the West, displaying none of those formidable characteristics of appearance and temperament which we associate with the profession of Bill Sikes over here. He is seldom if ever armed, and if you corner him, rather than show fight he will plump on his knees and sue for mercy.

He rarely works in villages; the huts are too close, and the villagers take good care to guard their belongings from depredation. While indifferent to the risk attending the adornment of their children with valuable trinkets—as described in the preceding chapter—they either deposit their money and precious articles at night in a hole in the floor, over which they spread their sleeping-mats, or, still wearing the jewellery, they secure their cash in a net bag and go to bed with it tied round their waists; so that any attempt on the part of an intruder to get at one or the other rouses the whole house, and the thief, if not captured, is foiled, and has to run. The villager's live stock generally shares the hut with the family, the fowls

roosting on a bamboo slung across the little *pyal*, stoep, or verandah, with the cows, buffaloes, and goats tethered to its uprights. Another detriment to the village burglar is that each hamlet has its community of pariah dogs, which, though curs of the lowest degree, are splendid sentinels, and, unowned as they are, always give tongue whenever any one stirs abroad at night. No; it is in towns and cantonments—especially in the far-flung European quarters—where the house-thief plies his nefarious calling with more success. Receivers of stolen goods are to be found in every bazaar, so the robber has no difficulty in disposing of his spoil; the less so, as the purchaser packs the stuff off to a fellow-fence at some neighbouring station, that is, should the loot be of a traceable kind, and there is a hue and cry after it.

I myself have been only once attacked by burglars in the districts, and that mainly owing to my want of precaution. Once during the cold weather, at a place called Bezvada, I engaged a dozen extra coolies to work with my permanent party up to Ellore. At the end of the first day I marshalled the coolies in front of my tent, and calling for my tin dispatch-box, opened it, took out a bag of coin, and paid each man his due. As I was on merely a week's outing, I did not bring my heavy departmental iron cash chest, as I ought to have done, and had not much over a hundred rupees Government money with me. After settling with the coolies, I bathed, had dinner, did a little writing, and then went to bed. I must have slept for

some time, when an indefinable something roused me, and I felt sure that either men or animals were lurking close by. I was lying on my side, so, on opening my eyes, I looked straight in front of me, across the tent. A dim lantern burned on the table, and my dispatch-box rested on a chair by my bed, while a peon slept at the tent door; but I had no dog. Presently, the tent-flap was raised, a face peered through the opening, then a man crept in, followed by another, both almost naked, and making no sound. They evidently thought I was asleep, for now, stealthily rising to their feet, they approached me, advancing more into the light, when I distinctly recognised two of the Bezvada gang. They came nearer. I half-closed my eyes, and breathed as if in slumber; then, after a good stare at me, they gingerly lifted the dispatch-box and were about making off, when up I sprang with a shout and rushed at them. But the rascals were too nimble for me; they dropped the box and fled through the open door of the tent, jumping clean over the peon, who, in response to my exclamation, was struggling out of his blanket. The whole camp became alert; lanterns were lit, and, accompanied by my people, I hurried direct to the tent apportioned to the Bezvada gang. It was empty! We searched far and near; we knocked up the headman of the neighbouring village and made him turn the place inside out. No, the men were not there; so at length, giving it up as a bad job, we went back to camp and to bed. Next morning, as we were about

starting work, lo and behold! the Bezvada gang came bustling up, begging to be excused for being late for muster, and explaining that having found the tent—to which they were unaccustomed—too cold to sleep in, they had passed the night in an old ruined *chuttrum* or *serai* a short distance away. I immediately spotted my nocturnal visitors, called the couple forward, and taxed them with entering my tent during the past night and all but purloining my dispatch-box. I spoke confidently, for I had not the shadow of a doubt as to the identity of the culprits, and I intended having them seized and marched off to the nearest police station. Judge of my surprise when the two men in the calmest manner denied having been near my tent, further adding that had they made an attempt to steal my dispatch-box would they be rash enough to show me their faces again? Then, when I persisted in my accusation, they solemnly swore by every god in the heathen pantheon that they were innocent of the charge, while I for my part was prepared on oath to affirm these two very individuals did come into my tent; and I would have made the same attestation in a court of justice—with the Bible to my lips. However, though I had no doubt, I gave them the benefit of one, chiefly because I could not afford the time to go back to Bezvada to prosecute; but, naturally, I declined the gang's further services, and procured substitutes from the village. Needless to add, that ever afterwards I took my heavy cash chest into camp.

The cantonment burglar is a discharged servant, or in collusion with one of your household, or altogether an independent gentleman—working on his own initiation. The first of the trio—well acquainted with your bungalow, your habits, and so forth—starts with a great advantage. He knows where the dog is to be found, so he commences operations by soborning the canine, who will at once recognise an old friend, and refrain from barking. This done, he will next ascertain that the night watchman—if you keep him—or any one else in the verandah is really asleep, and this he does by creeping up to the recumbent form and giving a gentle tug at his enveloping blanket. If the sleeper makes no sign, the thief goes round to the open windows of your bedroom—generally illumined by a night-lamp—peeps in, and if he is satisfied that you also are in the arms of Morpheus, he proceeds to business. Supposing your windows are all iron-barred, and cutting through them is impracticable, he will try those doors farthest from the slumberer in the verandah. If one of these doors is available, in he goes, and helps himself to whatever valuables are removable. If he knows that you are in the habit of placing your ring, watch, links, and such-like articles upon the toilet-table, he will glide into your bedroom like a snake and secure them. The same with your money : if you keep it in a box under your bed or on a table, the villain will—if the box is light enough—carry it off ; if you store your coin in a bureau or cupboard, he will try these receptacles, which, as often as not, you leave unlocked, and

grope about the interior till his fingers encounter the box or bag he has often seen you extract rupees from, and promptly secure it. Should none of the outer doors yield him admission, he climbs to the roof, and fastening the rope he brings with him to the crossbar of a ventilator he gently drops the cord end into drawing or dining-room, lets himself down, appropriates what valuables he can carry, and climbs up the rope the way he came. If he is unable to effect an entry anywhere, he will prowl round the house and abstract through the window-bars such articles as may be lying on the sills. India is the land of thieves, and few are the houses of Europeans with windows unprotected by heavy iron bars or gratings.

The depredator with "a friend in the garrison" acts under the guidance of his confederate—your treacherous servant—who, while hankering after your goods, is generally too timid to thieve them himself. Lacking courage to act alone, he looks around for some "professional," finds one, proposes the "crack," and covenants with him to share the proceeds. In a case of this nature the conspirators choose a night when you are out, say, dining with friends. It is a known thing that on such occasions directly you drive away at seven or so, all your domestics hie off home or to lark in the bazaars, leaving one of their number to guard (?) the house. By previous arrangement with his fellows our man is deputed to this duty, and the others promptly quit the premises. You are expected back at midnight, so the truants take care to return a little before

that time, while our man's burglar friend appears a couple of hours earlier, so as to have the coast clear for his own doings. The dog may be regarded as a negligible quantity; he gives no trouble, for our man easily pacifies him. If there is a way of entering the house, the two will use it, and help themselves to such articles as will not be readily missed. As to money and jewellery, you are not such a fool as to leave the bungalow with them lying about; you lock them up in bureau or cupboard. To open either of these would take time and make a noise; they would, moreover, want a light, which some stray beat constable on the road might hear or see and come to investigate. Under these circumstances they resolve to devote their attention to the outside; so, after taking whatever can be picked up in the rooms, they go in the dark to the fowl-house. The run door is easily forced, but that of the fowl-house itself is furnished with a stout padlock. They try to pick the lock, but in vain; the small window is iron-barred, and there would not be time to saw through one. Hence, after a whispered consultation, our man goes and fetches a light bamboo ladder; they rear this against the fowl-house, mount to the roof, remove the tiles, and break some of the underlying laths—there is no plastering beneath—till they make an aperture large enough; then they draw up the ladder, let it down through the hole into the interior, descend, and light a piece of candle, which our man carefully shades, while the other seizes the astonished fowls, summarily smothers their protestations, puts them one after another

into the sack he is provided with, and where they lie still enough. Having secured as many birds as are deportable, they climb out and get down. The burglar sneaks off with his load, while our man replaces the ladder, the two appointing a rendezvous for the following day, where they can meet and divide the proceeds. The thief—as soon as he issues from the gate—starts singing, in order to disarm the suspicions of any inquisitive person he may encounter on the road. He has no difficulty in disposing of his spoil. The birds being intended for consumption are, for the short interim, straightway metamorphosed out of their former selves; deprived of a tail here, some feathers there, a touch of colour on the wings of this one, the application of a little blacking to the yellow legs and beak of that one, render them unrecognisable, at least, to swear by: so you need not hope to identify your property, even should the police believe they have traced it. Then the rascal sells the birds to the fence; the deal is done, the assignation is kept, and our man takes his share of the proceeds. In the meanwhile—for the unfaithful servant. After seeing his friend off, he goes and lies down in his place in the verandah. Presently the other domestics return in a body. They find our man apparently asleep under his blanket; your dog, with much tail-wagging and whining, welcomes them, as much as to say he would like to report what has been going on if he could. Finally, you drive home. Your butler unlocks the front door, and before entering, you note with satisfaction that our man is at his post right enough—

curled up in his blanket, and snoring lustily, so you go to bed, and are happy. Next morning there is a great hullabaloo. The servants in a high state of excitement beg you to come and inspect the fowl-house; you go; you realise what has happened; you question the domestics; they all swear through thick and thin that they were on the premises during your absence the night before, and express themselves at a total loss to account for the burglary. You send for the police; they come, examine the fowl-house, and critically observe that some uncommonly clever cracksman must have done the job. They take copious written notes; in their turn they interrogate the servants, browbeating and threatening them with condign pains and penalties. The domestics emphatically reiterate their denials; they know nothing whatsoever about the matter; they dare not tell of their nocturnal trip to the bazaar, while our man, the most earnest of all, but with tongue equally tied, laments with tears in his eyes that he must have slept too heavily.

The burglar—not one of your discharged servants, or one with a colluder in the house, and who has a design on your goods—takes care to make a preliminary reconnaissance. He will come and offer himself as a coolie, say, to assist your gardener in cleaning the compound, rolling your lawn, clipping your hedges, and so forth; or, under the guise of a petty hawker, he will step boldly into your verandah and exhibit some trash for sale, his eyes busy the while, making mental notes for his guidance during his contemplated nocturnal visit. These

are only two instances of the thousand and one subterfuges the wily rascals resort to to obtain their end.

On one occasion, when staying with a young married couple at a place up-country, while my hostess was paying her domestics, with wages-book open before her, and two bags—one of rupees, another of small change and coppers—on the table, a Mahomedan, armed with a thick stick, suddenly rushed in at the gate, and wildly shouting *Nâg Sânp! Nâg Sânp!* (cobra snake), scudded down towards the farther end of the compound. All in the bungalow with one accord—leaving everything—went after him, and there we found the fellow belabouring a large cobra that whipped about in its death-throes. Asked how he had seen the dangerous reptile, the man explained that as he was passing along the lane skirting our enclosure he had marked the snake wriggle through a crevice in the wall, which being too high for him to scale, he had made bold to enter by the gate in the hopes of killing the cobra, and earning a reward. We all stood round for some minutes, and when the Moslem had completely battered the life out of the snake we measured the reptile—to find it nearly five feet long. The man accompanied us back to the house to receive his recompense, and on the lady returning to her pay-work, there arose a fine to-do, for both those bags of money had disappeared! Not dreaming of connecting the snake-killer with the spiriting away of those bags, my friend gave him five rupees and sent him off rejoicing. The police were sum-

moned and placed in possession of all the facts of the case. They started to try and trace the burglar, but no capture was effected, and the native sub-inspector who came a day or two later to report no find, explained to us how the theft had probably been done, for it was a "dodge" well known to the police. There were two men, he said, in the scheme. They had somehow learned that it was the servants' pay-day in our house, and that the lady would be engaged in distributing their wages at such-and-such a time. They well knew that the dreaded cry of *Nâg Sânp* would create a general stampede, so they hunted round, captured and disabled a cobra, threw it over our compound wall, and while one man made his sensational entry, and attracted every one in the bungalow to the far end of the enclosure to see him dispatch the serpent, his confederate quietly walked into the deserted dining-room, and as quietly walked out again with those bags of coin.

Walker—a young Anglo-Indian tea-planter —made the acquaintance of an American at a Madras hotel. The latter was a stamp-crank, a Philadelphian named Bratt, on tour in India—mainly for stamp-hunting. Walker also being a philatelist in a minor degree, the two naturally confederated, and in pursuit of their hobby decided to visit a seaport village far to the south in quest of Mauritius stamps, Bratt having somehow ascertained that the said village was formerly the chief outlet of British-Indian coolie emigration to the Isle of France. Briefly told, they

went, and had a most exciting time. They "struck oil" with a vengeance, for among the many good stamps they obtained from the natives—and which they in their ignorance gladly parted with for a few pice—they secured a "Post Office" one penny (vermilion), and a "Post Office" twopenny (blue)—philatelic gems of the first water, as any stamp-collector will certify to. In the hope of finding more of these ultra rarities, the two men prolonged their stay, sent the natives half crazy by offering five rupees per specimen, and turned the whole village upside down, but in vain; not another stamp of that particular issue could be discovered. The night previous to starting on their return journey to Madras, the friends overhauled their "bag," freed the stamps of paper, and while Walker took charge of the bulk, Bratt, for greater security, deposited the two precious "Post Offices" in the back of his watch-case, it being agreed that they should divide the spoil comfortably over their albums at Madras. They reached their destination late in the evening, had dinner, and being too tired to do more that night, they went to bed. Next morning there was great consternation when Pratt missed his watch, which he had placed on a side-table in his bedroom, close to the window, and with those philatelic treasures still in the case. They immediately sent for the police: Bratt described his watch, and promised a large reward for its recovery. Sooner than the friends expected it, the police reappeared in the course of the day, escorting an East Indian lad, an under-clerk at the hotel, whom they had

luckily pounced upon in the act of trying to dispose of a gold watch at a well-known fence's.

"Is this your watch, sir?" queried the police sergeant, handing the article to Bratt.

"That is so," replied the American, recognising his property by the monogram. "I'm just glad to get it again," proceeding, as he spoke, to open the back; on doing which, imagine their feelings when they found nothing there!

"What have you done with what was inside this?" demanded the Yankee in a die-away voice of the prisoner.

"I only finding little dirty pieces of paper, sir," snivelled the fellow; "I throw into fire, so as to destroy all trace."

Try and realise those stamp-hunters' sentiments towards that young Vandal!

BHAMPTAS IN DISGUISE.

CHAPTER III

HIGHWAY ROBBERY

THE worst class of highway robber India ever had, and, let us hope, ever will have, is the *Thug* —a word derived from the Hindee *Thugna*—to defraud, to do evil. Fortunately for the country and the good name of the British Government, these pests have been well-nigh stamped out by now, and are seldom if ever heard of, though no doubt their surviving descendants—perforce transformed into peaceful tillers of the soil and tenders of flocks, must sigh for the palmy days of old, as, under the influence of the predatory afflatus, they yearn to be up and doing, while fear of the *Sirkar* (British Government) bids them be still.

Speaking of these *Thugs* in the past tense, let it be said that, confining their operations chiefly to the trunk roads, they were not only highway robbers, but murderers and assassins, holding themselves together under a so-called religious bond of union as votaries of a certain female deity of Hindoo mythology, known by various appellations, more commonly those of Doorrga Mye or Cali, the goddess of destruction, wife of the great god Shiva, one of the Hindoo Trinity or Trimoorrti, consisting of Shiva the aforesaid,

Brahma, and Vishnoo. The profession of *Thuggi*, carried on under the ægis of Cali, was hereditary: the women taking no active part, but the sons, when old enough, would accompany the fathers in their expeditions and learn the work from them. They were rarely content with robbery alone. "Your money *or* your life" was not their demand when waylaying the luckless traveller; it was, "Your life *and* your money," followed by a throw of the fatal noose with which they strangled their victims, to leave the bodies to rot on the wayside or be devoured by jackals. This method of taking life, together with a certain amount of uncanny mystery attending their proceedings, caused the *Thugs* to be held in absolute terror by the natives, especially up-country, and consequently the people regarded with gratitude the action of their rulers towards exterminating the dangerous freebooters.

Dacoits are another predatory class—their operations being styled *Dacoity*. They are by no means extinct, and may be scheduled with the highway robber of this article. Unlike the *Thug*, however, the *Dacoit*, though to all intents and purposes a knight of the road, will form a band and raid a house known to contain valuables: indeed, he will harry a village if times are bad and he is numerically strong enough. But he is not a wanton assassin after the manner of the strangler, which perhaps accounts for his not having been so sternly put down as the *Thug*; he will only shed blood in self-defence, such as in a conflict with the police when the day goes against him. Further, he is not

actuated by any quasi-religious motives or obligations; he plunders simply for the sake of plunder.

The ordinary Indian highwaymen hunt in gangs—there are no Dick Turpins amongst them—but they do not attack wayfarers promiscuously, and thus incur the chance of drawing a blank. While the main body lies concealed in jungle or thicket skirting a lonely part of the road, their well-disguised scouts are busy in the adjacent town or village, and when they hear of a traveller whose state and circumstances lead them to conclude that he will be carrying money, or valuables readily convertible into money, word is forthwith sent to the gang. They prepare accordingly: a preconcerted signal from the scout who follows the intended quarry warns them. They waylay the wretched traveller, strip him of all that he has, perhaps tie him to a tree, and decamp. Other itinerants—more prudent—before venturing on to a road reported as unsafe, wait at some town or village till a string of carts is going the same way, or till a crowd of travellers—equally apprehensive—have congregated, when they will proceed together, relying in their numbers for safety.

The *Sowcar* or native banker; the *Soudagar, Chetty*, or merchant, both with money on them; the *Zemindar* or landlord returning from collecting his rents, are the sort of folks whom the highway robber delights to stop and pillage; for are not all three oppressors of their poorer brethren, and is there not a tie of passive sympathy between the thieves and the more indigent

of the population, who from the fact of never suffering at the hands of the marauders never inform against them? The classes of rich natives above alluded to are generally attended by retainers; but through previous information furnished by the scouts the band know the strength of the escort, whether armed, how armed, and if the bigwig himself is provided with gun or pistol. Should the expected resistance be too strong for them, there will be no attack; but if the anticipated booty is exceptionally large, messengers will be sent flying to their stronghold—not very far off in the jungle—to bring up auxiliaries. The reinforcement arrives in time, and they hold a council of war. They have no wish to shed blood, and are less desirous of losing any of their own men; the travellers, therefore, must be overpowered before a sword can be drawn or pistol cocked. Would an ordinary ambush do? No; the travellers, expecting some such attack, would have time to meet it; so, posting themselves where darkness will have overtaken the coming party, they choose their ground, a spot well away from all habitations, and disguising themselves as harmless people journeying to a far country, and lighting fires, they camp out on the roadside. They are particularly nice to any chance passengers going in the opposite direction, so that they do not report to those for whom they are waiting the presence of any suspicious characters on the road behind them. At the "camp" the robbers sit quietly till the scouts hurry in and announce the approach of the prey. A last look round is

taken, and every man composes his features. The travellers arrive; they are courteously saluted by the "harmless" bivouackers, who ask the party to halt awhile and warm themselves at the fires, or else they crowd round the cart and make obeisance to the great man within. In either case, when suspicion has been lulled, at a given signal from the robber leader, they throw themselves, two or three to one, on the escort, picked men jump in at both ends of the cart, while others outspan the bullocks and secure the driver. Then, after making a clean sweep of everything of value, and whatever arms the party may possess, the robbers bind their victims with cord, and, leaving them to get free as best they can, dive into the jungle and disappear.

Where railways do not serve—and there are immense tracts of country still without the "iron horse"—mails—both letter and parcel—are carried by horse-cart, mounted man, or runner on foot. In Scinde I have seen camels sometimes used, and in Assam I once came across an elephant lumbering along with his *mahout* or driver and a postal official perched behind him hugging a tiny bag of mail matter, weighing perhaps five pounds.

The *tappal-kurran* or *dâk-wallah* (postal runner) on a robber-haunted route goes immune till the omnipresent spies get to hear that *Sowcar* (banker) Such-a-one has insured a parcel of gold coins to *Sowcar* So-and-so at a neighbouring town, and which parcel will be carried along this particular road. Money orders, currency

notes, cheques, *hoondies* (native bills), and other ordinary mail articles being of no use to them, the gang prepares to intercept that carrier with that parcel of gold coins. Concealing themselves at a suitably lonely spot on the road—night or day—they spring out on the luckless Mercury, whether driving, riding, or on foot, rip open the bag, take the parcel of gold coins, recognisable from its weight, restore the bag, and allow the bearer to proceed, they themselves making a good offing ere the plundered one has time to raise a hue and cry at the next village. A great stir is made. The post office has to "stump up" to the *Sowcar*; the country is scoured by the police; an armed constable accompanies the mail carrier, till in course of time, owing to lack of clue or discovery, the incident dies out, for the very good reason that those gold coins were promptly melted down, either to be converted out of all recognition into ornaments, or the ingot bartered for rupees with some safe fence miles away from the scene of the robbery.

While on the subject of postal-runner robberies I may give the following amusing instance wherein a tame bear figured as the culprit. Captain C—— of the Mangalore garrison owned a pet bear who, when he managed to get loose, indulged in all manner of antics more laughable than dangerous, for the brute was as harmless as a kitten. One night the bear slipped his collar, disappeared, and nothing was heard of him till the next day, when the Mangalore post office people were thrown into con-

sternation by the runner trotting in minus his bag. He said that early that morning, just as dawn broke, a few miles from the station, he was suddenly confronted by a bear which advanced towards him so threateningly that the wretched fellow dropped his bag and flew for his life. The news spreading, and Captain C—— divining that his pet must have frightened the runner, he galloped out to the spot indicated by the man, with the object of capturing the truant and recovering the bag; but not a trace of either bag or bear could he find. C—— was re-entering the cantonment when one of his servants rushed up to report that the bear had just returned to his tethering-place with a bag which he declined to give up. Hastening home, C—— sure enough found the beast seated on the missing bag, which, after a little persuasion, the officer succeeded in securing. The brute had actually carried that bag a distance of four miles! Perhaps he intended tearing the sack and its contents to bits at his leisure, but was prevented from perpetrating such mischief by his master's opportune arrival.

In South India, grains, such as rice, wheat, *raggy* or millet, *kolloo*, vetch or horse-gram, etc., are carried in sacks packed in open bullock-carts; or in lieu of the sacks, the cart body is shut in with coarse mats, the hollow thus formed filled with the cereal in bulk, covered with more mats, and loosely tied. These carts travel in long strings, preferably at night, as the bullocks move faster in the cooler air. They outspan at

eight o'clock or so to allow of the drivers eating their food—over from the midday dinner—and giving the cattle a short rest. After the heavy supper of cold curry-and-rice the journey is resumed, and the drivers mount their carts and fall asleep, all except he of the leading vehicle; a post which the others take in turn at intervals of a few miles. Attended by some women with baskets, a man—a minor species of highway robber—lies in wait by the roadside till a train of grain carts comes creaking and creeping along. Ascertaining that most if not all the drivers are asleep, the man cautiously approaches the hindmost cart, and with a sharp knife stabs sack after sack, or cuts the enclosing mats in as many places as are accessible. What is the result? Cascades of grain shaken by the jolting motion of the springless cart pour on to the road, and are frantically gathered by the women—mud and all—into their baskets till they can hold no more, whereupon the whole party dive into the jungle and regain their homes, to winnow the grain from the mud, and thus amply replenish their store. When the driver wakes up, he notices with astonishment that his cart is running very light. A halt is called; his comrades are summoned; they crowd round, and investigation probably shows most of the sacks three-quarters empty, or the mats lying flaccidly over the well-nigh depleted body!

Indian highway robbers will rarely venture to hold up European travellers, for fear of firearms, and the greater chance of being captured or run down; but the following

is an instance of greater daring or less caution.

F—— and S——, engineers, were journeying on duty from P—— to T——. There being no railway, they went by bullock *dâk*, that is, they shared a roomy spring-coach, which was dragged by a relay of bullocks previously posted every five miles along the route. They had no followers beyond the solitary bullock driver, for both expected to be back at P——, their station, in a few days. Further, being somewhat heedless young fellows, neither had brought his gun with him, probably because they knew there would be no time for shooting on the way. All these particulars the gang of robbers had previously ascertained through their spies, and as Europeans are generally accredited with carrying rupees, the highwaymen thought this a good opportunity of acquiring some. Each traveller had a bag of clothes, a store of tin provisions, and a supply of soda water for drink was carried in the coach. The road was not considered particularly safe ; robberies had recently been committed, but only on natives, so the friends did not dream of being molested. F—— had brought a fine ship's telescope with him, which, during the day, they both used in viewing any bits of scenery that attracted their attention, and when darkness fell F—— stowed his glass in the overhead rack-net. Nothing happened till late at night, about twenty miles short of T——, when they were roused from sleep by the coach stopping, ejaculations of alarm from the driver, and the flashing of lights.

On looking out of the window they saw a number of natives carrying torches, and barring their progress by standing across the road.

"They are *Kullars*, sir!" whispered the driver, naming a certain caste of professional highwaymen for which the T—— district was, and still is, notorious—a piece of information that caused the friends to realise the seriousness of their predicament, for they had no fire or other arms, nothing, indeed, beyond their walking-sticks, and were consequently powerless to cope with the score of ruffians who confronted them, their waistcloths triced up, and bearing iron-shod *lathis* or bamboos, their usual weapon. The Englishmen sternly ordered them in vernacular to stand aside, but as they exhibited no guns or pistols to enforce the command, the robbers became bolder and crowded up to the coach, vociferating that if the occupants refused to surrender their money and valuables they would take them—*vi et armis*. At this juncture F—— reached up for his telescope, unscrewed it at the middle, gave S—— one half and bid him do as he did. Holding the brass tubes pistol-wise the friends pointed them through the windows at the *Kullars*, and vowed they would fire if the rascals did not sheer off. The effect was magical, for without awaiting a repetition of the threat the robbers tumbled over each other in headlong flight, and in six seconds not a man of them was to be seen. They had evidently taken those harmless brass tubes, on which the fitful torchlight glinted, for baby-cannon or something equally dangerous! Had

it not been for F——'s happy thought in adopting the ruse, the friends would have been robbed, and perhaps beaten into the bargain.

Formerly, when roads were the only means of intercommunication, and one Government Treasury had to transmit, say, fifty thousand rupees to another Government Treasury, the coin, packed in fifty sealed bags of a thousand rupees each, would be placed on a cart or carts and guarded by a large body of police—armed with loaded muskets. A subordinate native officer went in command, and elaborate precautions were taken. They travelled only in broad daylight; the headman of each village they passed through would—with his own myrmidons—have to accompany the party to the next hamlet; and at night the village where they halted would have to supply not only fuel for watch-fires, but a body of responsible men to supplement the guard-proper. Then, should the convoy pass through any *Sudder* or sub-*Sudder* station, that is, where a revenue official was located, the carts would be taken to his *cutcherry* or office, and the seals examined by him. In marked contrast to all these somewhat old-world arrangements, the writer witnessed only last year, while in India, the arrival by railway of a consignment of two lacs (200,000) of rupees for the local bank, and this huge sum, in two-thousand-rupee wooden boxes, deposited in a covered goods wagon in charge of a single unarmed Eurasian bank official and a couple of native peons!

A rather good story is told of the civil head

of a district, Mr. R—— P——, who ruled the large collectorate of M—— in South India. He had lately been sent there owing to some mismanagement on the part of the man he had relieved. The district bore an evil reputation for highway robbers, and, to stamp these out, Government had pitched on Mr. R—— P——. He soon realised the task to be a most difficult one, for the evil had become too deep-seated, and nothing but some drastic measure would uproot it. R—— P—— suggested that a regular military expedition be sent to scour the country, destroy the robber strongholds, and capture as many of them as possible. But this the Government disapproved of, especially as the marauders had not shed blood; so he was told to do his best with the civil police already at his disposal. Aware how these police had hitherto failed, how they, while guarding treasure, had been several times worsted by the robbers, R—— P—— hit on another plan: he resolved to touch the brigands on their *amour-propre*, to make them feel so ashamed of themselves for being outwitted that they would never have the face to lift finger against a treasure convoy again. Giving out that a consignment of a hundred thousand rupees would shortly start under police convoy for a neighbouring station, and which the officials—of course watched by spies—at the Treasury were openly busy counting, weighing, and sealing in the hundred bags, R—— P——, taking trustworthy men into his confidence, was equally busy at his house filling a hundred bags with shingles and pebbles,

making them the same size and weight as the veritable bags, and sealing each with his official seal. The carts were duly loaded with the rupees that evening, and the police-guard took charge preparatory to setting out before dawn. The spies seeing that all was ready, hurried off to the gang to tell them when to expect the convoy. At dead of that night R—— P—— himself startled the police sentries by suddenly coming on them, and imposing silence, he called for the inspector commanding, and imparting the secret, ordered him to inspan and bring the carts quietly to the Collectorate bungalow. The carts were brought; the hundred bags of rupees were replaced by the hundred bags of stones; the former were stored in R—— P——'s house, guarded by his crowd of servants; the latter taken back to the Treasury building, from where the convoy started at the hour appointed. In due course the attack came; the police—already instructed—made no resistance, and hastened back to headquarters, while the exulting highwaymen drove off the carts into the jungle. That they must have given vent to unparliamentary language on discovering the cheat goes without saying; anyhow, it had such a salutary effect on the robbers, who, fearful of being hoaxed again, never molested a Treasury convoy from that day forth.

Here is an instance of chivalrousness on the part of the Indian highway robber.

A lady—the wife of a telegraph officer—was travelling in Scinde on camel-back through a very sparsely inhabited bit of country. Beyond

the camel-man, who walked ahead, leading the beast by a cord reeved through its nose, the lady was practically alone, for her husband and his working party were following the telegraph line far off to the right, while the baggage camels and servants had long since gone on in advance. Suddenly, from some bushes skirting the track, three men—Beloochee bandits, armed with swords—sprang out, seized the camel's leading rope, and threatening the man with instant death if he resisted, caused the animal to sit down.

"What do you want of me?" queried the solitary Englishwoman in Hindee, without dismounting or exhibiting any signs of fear, although—as she subsequently described—her heart was in her mouth.

"Your money and your valuables!" cried the highwaymen in chorus.

"What if I refuse?"

"We will take them by force, and perhaps injure you."

"I dare you to touch me!" she replied, looking them defiantly in the eyes.

For a few moments the robbers hesitated, whispered to each other, and then the leader, in quite an altered tone, addressing her, said, "Go in peace, *Feringhinee* (European woman). Your bravery has conquered where your strength would have not availed you"; and all three, making her a respectful salaam (salute), disappeared in the bushes.

CHAPTER IV

PILFERING—PETTY THEFT

THE palm for picking and stealing must be awarded to your indoor servants, although some outsiders play the same game effectively. The postman, for instance, as he passes your flower-beds, will take a bloom and stick it behind his ear, no sooner out of your gate ; or the milk-man, after supplying the house with milk(?), and while driving out his cow, will, under pretence of keeping the animal off your unfenced kitchen garden, snatch a cucumber, conceal it in his waistcloth, and look as mild as the fluid he dispenses should he happen to catch your reproving eye ; or the messenger with a " chit " from a friend, while waiting for answer, will stroll to your *papaya* or poppoy tree, shake or knock down fruit and pocket it. Should you—having witnessed the act—shout at him, he will produce the fruit, and with a deprecatory grin assure you that he found it on the ground. The poppoy is worth a farthing ; you have your reply reading in your hand, so, wishing to avoid a fuss, you give him the missive, with a warning to keep his fingers off other people's property.

Almost every Indian domestic pilfers—from the butler on his fifteen or twenty rupees a month

down to the urchin dog-boy on two. All will take advantage of you in one way if not in another. The writer says it with regret, but during his long experience of the country he has rarely met exceptions. This form of brigandage is ingrained in their natures; they do not regard it as robbery or as a modification thereof. You can trust them with money or valuables; they will not abuse the trust; but the very same men think nothing of filching your cigars, your groceries, or making a few annas out of you in a bazaar deal. Their idea of right and wrong is sufficiently elastic to allow of their looking on this species of thievery as something venial—their perquisite, in fact, and therefore quite admissible. Whatever their caste, persuasion, or religion may be; whether convert, heathen, pariah, or Mahomedan, they regard you as a legitimate object to plunder; and you have to put up with it, for if you dismiss them to engage others, the chances are you take unto yourself spirits as bad, if not worse, than the first.

As a rule, natives of all classes, ages, and castes are inveterate tobaccanalians—they will smoke, even if they have to starve for it—your servants being notable examples. Say you bring home from club, mess, or shop, a hundred-box of choice cigars, which you open and leave on your table, to be called for when you wish to smoke, or to replenish your case before going out; well, your dressing-boy or valet sees that box; he loves the weed, so he helps himself to one or two cigars. At midday meal-

hour he goes to the outhouse range, gobbles down his rice, and then lights up. His confrères immediately ask how he obtained that cigar, which he meets by saying that his uncle had just handed it him over the compound wall. Arrant liars themselves, they estimate such an assertion at its true value : the dog-boy, waterman, and *thunnikurrsee* or waterwoman mentally resolve to get at those cigars ; they do not ask the valet where they are kept, for fear he should suspect them as intending poachers on his preserve and place the box out of their reach. The other domestics are not in it : ordinarily speaking, they have no business in the wings, where the bed, dressing, and bathrooms are situated. The whole posse know from the fagrant aroma that the valet has got hold of one of your weeds, for the stench thrown out by the vile things these poor people use is unutterably sickening, composed as they are of chopped-up rubbish, mixed with cow-dung, a pinch of refuse tobacco or snuff, and an outer wrapping of the leaf. Well, the dog-boy, under pretence of looking for his charge, walks boldly past you into your bedroom, and while calling your terrier by name—who by the same token scurries in from outside—the lad glances round, spies the box, and takes a cigar, which he promptly conceals in the folds of his *puggree* or turban. The waterman—who properly speaking should not penetrate beyond your bathroom—times his visit there till close upon the meal-hour. Finding the coast clear, he steals in, helps himself, and beats a retreat. The

others are ignorant that Aquarius has also been making free with your cigars, for being a "caste man," he eats his rice by himself in some remote corner of the compound, and enjoys his post-prandial smoke there as well; so no one spots him. The waterwoman has ample opportunities of emulating dog-boy and waterman: she goes daily to sweep your rooms while you are out on your morning walk or ride. She is supposed to be overlooked by the valet, but that youth, no sooner your back is turned, hurries over his work and goes out for a game of play with the younger members of your establishment, so the waterwoman has the field to herself. She escapes remark, for being a female she is too coy to smoke in the presence of the men; therefore, with the exception perhaps of the *ayah* or lady's maid, and that indispensable votaress of Cloacina, the *Totachee* or *Hullal-kornee, i.e.* the scavenger-woman, for mind you there is no drainage system up-country. These two—the only other female servants—may catch the waterwoman pulling away at your cigar; but she propitiates them with a gift of *pawn* (pan) or *betel*-leaf, so no one is a bit the wiser. And so it goes on: imperceptibly the contents of that box dwindle: in blissful ignorance you continue expending those cigars till suddenly it strikes you that the weeds are going faster than your consumption of them warrants: your suspicions are aroused; you summon those of your domestics who have access to your rooms; you interrogate them; you charge them with filching your tobacco; they strenuously deny

the impeachment, swearing—the converts by the Blessed Virgin Mary, the heathens by one of their many gods, a certain Mooneeswaraswamy generally—that they do not smoke; 'twould make them sick, giddy; while as for purloining any of the master's property, avaunt the idea! Anyhow, you lock up your cigars, and find that they last you considerably longer than when you left them lying about on your table. A sort of clip has been devised for attachment to the cigar-box itself; but it is not a success: it either does not catch, or the cunning rogues manage to open the box in spite of that clip.

The milkman is an arrant pilferer in his way: he is master of certain tricks of the trade which would make the unscrupulous home dairyman grow green with envy. If you arrange with him to call round, the stuff he supplies for the first few days is good, but the quality gradually deteriorates, and in course of time you awake to the fact that a great proportion of the milk is water. You protest; you storm in vain: you procure a lactometer from Bombay or Calcutta, and when the milkman next shows, you spring the instrument on him, and prove by ocular demonstration that his milk contains so many parts water. He becomes highly indignant, repudiates the efficacy of the lactometer, and swears there is not a drop of water in his milk. You think otherwise, pay the fellow up and bid him begone, whereat, after reasserting his innocence of all intent to fraud, he will offer to bring his cow twice a day to your back verandah and milk her in your presence; for he is a poor

man, he whines, overburdened with many olive branches, and can ill afford to lose your custom. Thinking this arrangement would give him no loophole for further victimising you, you acquiesce : he brings his cow ; you see him milk her in your can ; the fluid is pure, and matters calm down. In a few days, however, the cow refuses to be milked : the man tries to bring her to reason by abusing her progenitors, and at last turning to you, as if in despair, explains that the beast has become frightened of your can, so may he use his own *lotah* or globular brass vessel, to which she is accustomed ? adding, perhaps, with a grin, that cows—like women—are prone to be fanciful. You agree : the cow is pacified ; she yields her store without further demur, and you think the difficulty has been overcome. But lo you ! in a day or two the milk becomes lighter, you wonder how : you apply the lactometer secretly, and it tells you that the milk is half water. You say nothing, make no sign till the man appears the next morning, when, as he is about to commence operations, you jump forward and seize the *lotah*, which you find contains a quantity of water ! Caught red-handed this time, he is dumb, and you dismiss him on the spot.

A lady in the habit of having the cow milked in her presence, was surprised one day to see the attendant milkman bearing on his shoulders the stuffed skin of a large calf, which he placed close to the cow. When asked to explain, he said that the calf was the cow's, that the former had died, and that the latter would not " let down " her milk unless the effigy of her offspring

was by her. Thinking over this as something extraordinary, the lady became doubtful; so a few days afterwards she went out and snatched away the vessel just as the man was about to commence milking, and found the can already half full of milk, which on examination was heavily watered—brought by the rascal from his hut to palm off as drawn on the spot; while further investigation—by means of the servants—proved the cow to be as dry as a bone!

The butler will help himself to almost everything in the edible and drinkable line, and unless you keep the one strictly locked up and the other in a tantalus, your barrel of meal and cruse of oil will waste far quicker than you relish. Indeed, the writer has known a butler to wait at the breakfast-table provided with two paper bags—one in each pocket—to hold the tea and sugar which he manages to filch in the process of concocting the beverage at the sideboard, by adroitly spooning the sugar into one bag and the tea into the other, without as much as looking the least guilty over it. He lives on the premises in a *godown* or outhouse-room to himself: he generally owns a little kerosene lamp; so when you are out of the way, and he can get at it, he steals a bottle of oil from your tin or drum in the most dexterous manner. The matey, mate, or wash-up boy has not much chance of pilfering; but he will devour the scraps left in your plates as they are brought out to him, gather the dregs of your drinks by pouring them all into one glass, and toss off the mixture with zest. You feed your dog on a mess of boiled rice and tripe:

the dog-boy lives on rice, and tripe makes him a good curry; so it stands to reason that the young imp reserves a portion of both grain and entrails for himself before consigning them to the dog's cooking-pot. You do not discover this till your dog commences to lose flesh, displays a voracious appetite, or comes in redolent of some garbage he has been mangling outside to stay the pangs of hunger. Then you guess who the culprit is: you perhaps cuff the dog-boy, and order the butler to superintend the cooking of your pet's food, with the result that he soon picks up. The cook is the worst offender in this description of pilfering, for he is entrusted with the marketing. Besides spiriting away for his own use a portion of what he brings for your consumption, he insists on levying tribute from the tradesmen he deals with: thus, on purchasing your leg of mutton, the cook makes the butcher present him with a big handful of scrap-meat for his own curry. The vegetable stall-keeper, the bazaar-man or grocer, the biscuit-man or baker, and the rice-vendor—all have to propitiate your *chef* with a dole, otherwise he threatens to transfer his patronage elsewhere. Then, when later on he renders an account of the day's expenses to the *Dorasani*, or *Mem-sahib*, or lady of the house, he "puts on" to each item,—so infinitesimally, though, as to rouse no protest on the lady's part, nevertheless in the aggregate mounting up sufficiently to form a substantial addition to his monthly pay. Again, should you commission any one of them with the purchase, say, of a box of Sunlight soap, procurable cheaper in the

bazaar than at the "Europe shop,"—if there is one,—your messenger, after asking the price, which may be eight annas, will haggle with the bazaar-man till he agrees to accept seven annas. When he delivers the purchase to you, he will look you straight in the face and say that it cost nine annas, tendering the seven annas change out of the rupee you gave him. Thus your man makes two annas over that single transaction. Of course, the "Europe shop" has its set catalogued rates,—the servant knows that as well as you do, and that he can make nothing there,—but then you are equally aware that the "Europe shop" will charge twelve annas for the identical article, and as times are hard with you, as they are with all of us in India nowadays, you resort to the cheaper market, getting that box of Sunlight soap at a saving of three annas to yourself, while your man secures a profit of two.

All along the western coast of India, and a good distance inland, right away from Kurrachee to Cape Comorin, the Goanese or Indo-Portuguese are to be met with in various domestic-servant capacities. These people are originally descended from the early white Lusitanians, in their intercourse with the slave-women of the country, and subsequently by the marrying and intermarrying of their offspring. They are strict Roman Catholics, dress quite in European style, affect high-sounding Portuguese names, and make excellent servants; but with their Asiatic blood they have fully inherited the trickery, duplicity, and mendacity of the Indian native. They are

very efficient tailors, and though they can copy from a fashion-book, or turn you out a creditable suit of clothes, they are great rascals, and the following is an instance of how little they can be depended on from a moral standpoint. A civilian officer, while stationed on the Malabar Coast, imported a dozen dress shirts from home which were found to require certain alterations; so he gave them to the tailor he generally employed, and who promised to bring the garments back in two days' time. On the morrow the tailor came to say that as there was to be a grand wedding in his community that night, and in honour of which all the Goanese were keeping holiday, he could not bring the shirts so speedily as promised, and that as the alterations would tumble and crumple them he would—when the work was completed—have the shirts washed and ironed. The officer acquiesced; but while subsequently thinking over it, he smelt a rat: the marriage, considered in connection with the tailor being in possession of the shirts, the man's expressed intention of getting them washed and ironed previous to delivery, looked rather suspicious; so, late that night, he stealthily walked down to the Goanese quarter of the cantonment, where the sound of revelry and the gleam of torches emanating from a cocoanut grove guided him. He boldly stepped into the circle of light, so startling the Senhors and Senhoras that they stood staring at him in dumbfoundered amazement. Without giving the roisterers time to recover their wits, he produced a police whistle, and telling them to

stand fast, or he would call up a body of constables (imaginary, of course), the officer went straight up to his tailor, whom he recognised in the throng, and opened his coat—to find that the rascal was wearing one of his shirts. Without delay he continued the search, and located his eleven other shirts on as many men! The fact was that his shirts, coming in so opportunely for the wedding, the tailor had farmed those articles to eleven guests at the fandango! This little escapade was the ruin of that tailor—locally, at least: he could never obtain employment in the station again, so eventually he migrated, presumably to fresh fields and pastures new.

In India, unless you are in the Service and have trustworthy orderlies or peons at hand, and you wish to make perfectly sure that your letters, etc., reach the post office, you must either register them at a cost of two annas each, or go and post them yourself—an alternative not always convenient for many reasons, less so if the one post office is at the other end of the cantonment, and you are disinclined or too busy to walk or drive there in the blazing sun. Only recently, a very dear friend of the writer bethought him of starting a monthly magazine. He possessed literary ability, and having saved some money he launched his little barque with fair prospects of success. The thousand numbers of the first issue were mostly used in complimentary copies to the press, secretaries of clubs, reading-rooms, societies, private individuals, acquaintances, and so forth. Eight hundred

copies were distributed this way, the unfortunate fellow—who was single-handed—passing a whole week in putting up and stamping batch after batch as they came from the printers, and entrusting the posting thereof to his one servant whom he had confidence in. The daily load consisted of two hundred, which at one anna stamp on each packet represented the substantial sum of nearly thirteen rupees. Well, after dispatching his magazine, he waited in anxious expectation for results: a few acknowledgments dribbled in from local residents; a few subscriptions came, but out of all proportion to his expectations. Then he wrote reminders to the addressees, and some of them replied that the magazine had not come to hand. This was repeated when the second and third issues were similarly dealt with, so he threw the matter up in disgust. In the meanwhile, that servant had suddenly left, displaying a letter received from Pondicherry reporting the dangerous illness of his grandmother. *Then* it leaked out—how, the writer is unable to state—that that servant had yielded to temptation, and instead of posting those packets, had destroyed them after detaching the stamps, which he could dispose of at a small discount in any bazaar! By this time the luckless proprietor was on the eve of sailing for England, so he took no action.

CHAPTER V

DISHONESTY IN MONEY MATTERS

THE white man in India has not much directly to do with the outside native in respect to money matters. The owner of your bungalow is usually a son of the soil: you have dealings with him periodically, when he—or an accredited representative if he is too big a man to do so himself—appears on a certain specified date with the past month's house-rent bill, duly stamped and signed, whereupon you pay the money; he hands you the acquittance, and you do not see him again until next settling-day. You have a running account with the "Europe shop"—if there is one—at the station, and you square with the proprietor in the same manner, or you obtain anything which he cannot supply you with from larger emporia at the Presidency towns, receiving the goods by that admirable system we have out there, the "V.P.P." or "Value Payable Post." You drop a card to, say, a Bombay or Calcutta outfitter's for a dozen collars of a pattern unprocurable locally. You trouble yourself no more on the matter, and in a week's time your postman delivers you the collars, and you pay him the price plus a small charge levied by the Post Office for the

accommodation. Here, you have either to remit the money beforehand, or obtain your collars through a carrier; and it is not always or everywhere that the carrier is available. The wonder is that England does not take a leaf out of India's book, and establish this most convenient system.

Ordinary everyday expenses are paid for in cash through the medium of one or other of your numerous servants: for instance, the cost of your "bazaar" or messing, including meat, bread, milk, butter, and whatever answers to "groceries," are collected by the cook when he renders his daily account; so, practically, if seasoned enough, you have no outstandings, no credit, and everything of this kind is done with cash. But the new arrivals—notably young army officers—are at the commencement prone to paying the veriest trifles by cheque. True, they must have a balance at the local branch Presidency Bank, and which Bank has to bear the infliction of dealing with these driblet cheques till the nuisance moves the Agent to write and request the offender to cease issuing orders under a certain limit. It must be harassing to the Bank when Second Lieutenant Smithson draws a cheque for two rupees eight annas in favour of the farrier, or twelve annas for a book-hawker, or one rupee fifteen annas for ices, etc., at the solitary restaurant—run by a retired mess cook, but under a high-sounding Italian trade name. Smithson, after anathematising the Bank and wishing there was another establishment of the kind in the place to which he could transfer his patronage, takes care to

have some petty cash in the house and carry a few rupees about with him when he goes out.

In contradistinction to the Bombay or Bengal domestic servant, the Southerners or Madrassies are seldom illiterate : in addition to a knowledge of their own vernaculars, not only do they all speak English with more or less amusing grotesqueness, but many of them can both read and write it. Before being driven forth by the parents to go out to service and bring in money, they have been caught in the vortex of the present-day rage for universal education, and perhaps mastered our tongue up to the " sikkin " (second) book, when, developing inordinate appetites, and otherwise becoming a tax on the old people's pockets, they are taken away from school and sent to commence their hireling career as dog-boys, rising thence through the several gradations of wash-up boys or mateys, dressing-boys or valets, cooks' mates, and table-servants, till they reach one of the two pinnacles of their ambition by becoming cooks or butlers. In a bachelor establishment the valet or dressing-boy is *de facto* the head servant : there is no butler, and rarely a cook, for the young master —if he does not chum with a married couple— takes his meals at mess or club ; besides which, should necessity arise, the valet will generally be found capable of doing a little cooking. It is in the *ménage* of the young English bachelor where the valet rules supreme, and where he has many opportunities of practising dishonesty. The dressing-boy can speak, read, and write English : you find him conning some filthy

old school-book, or poring over yesterday's newspaper, squatted in the matey's godown or pantry, or in some corner of the back verandah. The lad comes to you with excellent testimonials, which you have proved to be genuine: you have had him in your service for a month, and matters run smoothly, till one day you suddenly catch him in your room engrossed in rummaging the contents of the waste-paper basket lying by your writing-table. He does not see you: he thinks you are smoking in your lounge-chair at the farther end of the verandah, where you are generally a fixture for an hour after returning from morning parade; having assumed "the pyjamas of comfort and the slippers of ease," you swallow a cup of tea or a whisky-and-soda as the case may be, light pipe or cigar, and read the paper. While thus occupied, you hear a faint rustling emanate from your room. You have not observed any one go in by the front, so, curious to ascertain who is in there, you slip out of your slippers, and in stockinged feet steal across to that part of the verandah on which your room opens—to find the valet busy as described. He seems to be hunting for some special object, and at last he happens on it, a bit of parti-coloured paper. However, he continues his search, comes on some other similar fragments, hastily pieces these fragments together on the palm of his hand, finds them complete, pockets them, and sneaks out by the bathroom, the way he came in. Those fragments are portions of a torn-up cheque! You remember that, the night before, you wrote the

wrong name when filling a cheque; that you tore it up, and made out a fresh one, with the dressing-boy standing by, to whom you gave the slip, to hand to the payee, waiting outside. *Now*, your suspicions, already partly aroused, are in full activity, for on last looking through your Bank pass-book, you found that a cheque you recollect making out for *two* rupees had been debited to your account for *twelve* rupees. You write a scrawling, commonplace sort of hand, so the "two" could easily be extended into "twelve," while the figure "1" put before the "2" completed the business. You recollect that you gave this cheque to the dressing-boy to cash and pay for a pair of white shoes to the *chuckler* or shoemaker, an ignorant, illiterate fellow, who of course could have had no hand in the matter. But did you make a stir? No. Why not? For the reason that you felt ashamed to proclaim your carelessness to the world: you are young and thoughtless: hitherto you have kept no account of your expenditure; how the money goes you do not know, and—more unpardonable still—you have not even taken the very necessary precaution of filling in the counterfoils of the cheque-book. If these facts became public property, you know you would be nicely laughed at, and told that you deserved being plundered. You are now sure that the valet is not merely untrustworthy, but a rascal capable of further roguery. You are curious to learn his object in hunting out and walking away with that torn-up slip: if he can manipulate the figures on a cheque, he will

not hesitate to do worse. You keep an eye on him, and the next day, seeing a strange man come in at the gates, pass round to the outhouses and stealthily beckon to the valet, who joins the visitor, you retire, allow a few minutes to elapse, then put on your sun hat, and with slippers on your feet, go into the back verandah. No one is about : it is noon, the servants' meal-time, and they are eating their rice, *i.e.* having their dinner, in the outhouses. An intuitive something tells you that the valet is not among them : the same power of mind directs you to some old disused stables at the far end of the compound : you go there, treading noiselessly : as you approach, you hear a low murmuring of voices proceeding from the back of the building : you enter the centre stall, and peep through the open oval air-hole in the farther wall, when you perceive that dressing-boy and the strange man squatted just under you, poring over the torn cheque, the portions of which have been pasted together ! The stranger has a penny ink-bottle on the ground before him ; the valet a pen in his fingers, and on his knee a sheet of paper, on which you are quite near enough to distinguish repeated imitations of your own calligraphy and your own signature — copied from that torn-up cheque ! You fathom it all now, and resolving to play into their hands, you steal back into the house, go to your room, and, unlocking your dispatch-box, take out your cheque-book and lay it on your table. In a day or two you miss a cheque, neatly abstracted—with counterfoil—from towards the end of the

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book. You drive down to the bank, where, sure enough, you learn that, among others, a cheque of yours for twenty rupees has been paid over the counter to some unknown bearer! The cheque is produced. Your writing and your signature have been marvellously well copied, the bank officials have been completely taken in, and you can scarcely credit your senses as, in company with the agent, you gaze at the clever forgery. This time you do make a stir. The police are called in; you denounce the dressing-boy and that strange man as his accomplice; you tell all you know, repeat it subsequently in the Magistrate's Court, and are not sorry when your erstwhile trusted valet and that strange man—who, by the way, turns out to be an old jail-bird, and in this instance presented the forged cheque for payment—are sentenced to terms of penal servitude.

The above is a typical instance of cheque-tampering; many others could be cited, but they are all more or less similar in their leading features, and would become monotonous in the telling.

Throughout India "bad rupees" are very common. By "bad" is meant not only the absolute counterfeit—made of lead, or other base metal—but coins apparently genuine enough, but which do not ring true, or are clipped, mutilated, or worn away by ordinary wear and tear—the last such as are current in this country; for instance, the early Victorian money, with scarcely a vestige of the die impression left on them. A rupee in that state is only fit to be sold as old

silver. You do not find these fakes and imperfections so largely among the smaller silver coins, except in the four-anna bits. The reason for this last is that the native servants are very fond of converting them into buttons for their jackets. But when an owner of a set of those studs becomes hard up, and he cannot dispose of his buttons for their indicated value, he files off and files down the loop or shank or whatever the catching arrangement is fitted to the nether surface, and tries to palm off the money on whomever he can. He takes care to present the bit right side up, and if the recipient does not turn the coin over, the blemish spot at the back is not discovered. When arrant counterfeits are detected at a bank they are broken up, while some firms nail them to the counter. An establishment in Bombay may be still surviving which some years ago displayed a counter extensively decorated with these spurious tokens.

The natives—even the most simple villagers—are very alive to the existence of faked or faulty money in the circulation; and it is one of the chief duties of banks and Government treasuries in India to be on the *qui vive* and weed out all such. If you pay a native in rupees, whether five or five hundred, he will sound every coin of them, and any that may fail to ring true he will decline to accept. When disbursing your servants' monthly pay, the air will be alive with metallic tinkling as each individual, before making his or her salaam of acknowledgment, or signing the acquittance, hurries to the back verandah granite steps and tests the rupees

by clinking them on the stone. If you are a novice, and have not yet learned the trick, fifty chances to one that some of the domestics will re-enter the room wearing looks of concern, and hand back as bad several of the coins which you are supposed to have just given them. You probably find a leaden rupee or two among the lot, but the others appear good to your eyes, and you ask what is wrong, whereupon they invite you to try the rupees yourself on the stone. You do so, first using a good rupee, and then the suspects; you notice the ring given out by the one, and the absence of corresponding "timbre" in the others; you are convinced, and replace all the faulty coins with fresh sound ones that you personally test on the stone. You mention the circumstance to some more experienced Anglo-Indian friend, who tells you that your servants, knowing you to be callow, took care to provide themselves with bad rupees—their own property, or borrowed for the occasion—which they have been unable to pass, and which they have garnered up for some such opportunity as this — opportunities that present themselves in abundance when a new regiment arrives from England, and before the officers and their ladies become seasoned. Both in giving and taking, the ringing process is adhered to; though troublesome, it is safer to observe it. The postman, when he delivers you a money-order, tinkles every rupee on the verandah step. If you hand in money at a post office, to remit by money-order, or for some other purpose, one of the postal officials

inside sounds the amount, coin by coin, and in both cases any dubious pieces must be changed. Any but glaring counterfeits of lead and so forth are negotiable in the bazaar—subject to a certain fluctuating discount. The professional money-changer will purchase a coin of the kind, say, for fifteen annas, or at one anna less its recognised value, and that coin he will foist upon some unwary customer for its full amount as soon as he can, so that he is always ready to do this kind of business.

In India small change in the house is a *sine qua non*, for you are constantly being called upon to pay trifling sums to coolies, hawkers, fruit-venders, beggars, and the like. There is not a row of shops round the corner, as we have here, with tradesmen obligingly prepared to change you anything—from a ten-shilling piece to a ten-pound note, or larger. You give your servant ten rupees, with instructions to go to the bazaar and procure small change—half in silver, half in copper. Unless the fellow knows you to be "acclimatised" enough, he will bring you the change nicely arranged in a dinner-plate, but one anna and eight pies short, that is, at the rate of two pies in every rupee, which he will unblushingly tell you is the *ravees*, or *vuddee*, or custom charged by the money-changer. As a matter of fact, there was no necessity to go to him, and you may be sure that your man did not. Any of the bazaar-keepers with whom you—through your cook—deal, or the Europe-shop, or even the post office, are only too glad to consolidate

the contents of their tills, and give you full value for your ten rupees; but your servant, presuming on your ignorance, tells you the story, and of course pockets the difference, he having changed the rupees at some one of your bazaar people, who gave him their full value.

H——, a telegraph superintendent, when newly transferred to Lower Bengal, sent his salary bill to the local Treasury for encashment. On the *chupprassi* or peon—a new man—returning with the bag, H—— in his presence counted the money, and then squatting down, sounded it, coin by coin, on the paving-flags, with the result that he found two lead rupees and several "dull" ones; these he handed back to the *chupprassi*, with a letter to the Treasury officer, asking him to change the bad rupees for good. After some delay the *chupprassi* brought back good rupees, but without any communication from the Treasury officer, which H—— at the time regarded as a breach of official etiquette. Well, next month the same thing happened, and on this occasion H—— rode down to the Treasury himself, gave in the bad coin, asking for good ones in lieu, and remarking that he had found several unsound pieces in his last month's pay, and which he had returned by his *chupprassi* to the Treasury, with a letter requesting their replacement. The Treasury officer denied all knowledge of this. He and his subordinates were astonished; they assured H—— that every coin—silver or copper—going out from the Treasury could be guaranteed

as good, and told H—— that the *chupprassi* must be the culprit. "Sir," said the Babu Treasury officer, "we will set trap for your man!"

"Very well," assented H——. "How do you propose to manage it?"

"Well, sir, to-morrow please send same man with letter in usual official envelope with cheque for fifty rupees in part of your departmental letter of credit."

"But," protested H——, "I do not want to draw any money just now."

"Never mind, sir; if you like you can hold money in your cash balance, or refund afterwards. I have many bad rupees with me. I will pay forty-seven of them, and three good rupees to your *chupprassi* for cheque, and if you find all fifty rupees to be bad, that will prove that your man has examined them in secret place on road and taken good rupees."

This was done. The wretched numskull fell into the trap, and the fact of every one of those fifty rupees being found to be bad by H——, proved the *chupprassi's* guilt. He was dismissed the service, tried, and sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

CHAPTER VI

POCKET-PICKING

"PICKPOCKET" is rather a misnomer as applied to the Indian variety of this class of criminal, for the reason that fully seventy-five per cent. of the public he preys upon are not provided with those convenient receptacles called pockets. The native—woman as well as man—does not employ a handkerchief for blowing the nose, so they require no pockets for that, to us, indispensable article. The pocketless man's usual method of carrying money is to tie it up in an end corner of his turban, or sometimes double it into a fold of his *dhoty* or loin-cloth—where that garment girts the waist; while the pocketless woman—who never wears any headgear—follows the latter plan, or, more frequently, makes a purse of her *pân-soopari* bag, which is thrust in between the cincture of her *sâdi* or body-cloth and the bare epidermis of her stomach. In addition to a partiality for tobacco, liquor, and opium, the natives of both sexes are, as a rule, inordinately given to *pân-soopari* chewing — a comparatively harmless habit, though, to us, a dirty one. The *pân* is the green leaf of the betel pepper-plant; the *soopari*, the chopped-up nut of the areca palm. A leaf

of the one, and a morsel of the other, with a few spices and a touch of *choonnah* or lime, all formed into a roll, and thrust into the mouth, as we would do with a stick of celery, is chewed for hours together as a stimulant. Of course, in the larger towns and European cantonments, where Western fashions have caught on and are aped, the men are fully provided with pockets; not so the women—as yet. All respectable females adhere to their national *sâdi* or *lungah*, for to be seen with any other description of covering would damage their reputation.

The favourite haunts of the pickpocket are railway stations, festivals, ceremonies, processions, shows—wherever, in fact, there is a crowd, and the people muster in strength, generally encumbered with young children—the father bearing one on his shoulder, the mother with a second across her hip, two clinging to her *sâdi*, and a babe at her breast. "The more the merrier," thinks the pocket-picker, for the presence of the little ones helps to mask his own designs on their parents. There is nothing evil or suspicious-looking about the marauder, either in his expression or dress; he gives one the idea of being a middle-class native in comfortable circumstances. He is alone; he carries nothing, not even a stick, and the only noticeable feature about him is a rather voluminous cloth, wound round his waist. He purposely keeps his hands unhampered, so as to give them free scope in the exercise of his nefarious profession, also to facilitate movement, while the waist-cloth—which is parti-coloured—is to throw

over himself in order to escape identification should he be caught in the act of pilfering, and has to run for it. He is a smooth-spoken, oily-tongued villain, conversant with several dialects, and by his "much fair speech" soon ingratiates himself with those he may talk with, especially females, who regard him in something the same light as our women look on the guard of an excursion train leaving a London terminus. But let us follow him and watch his *modus operandi*.

The pocket-picker knows that a great religious festival is to be held on such-and-such a date at, say, Tanjore. He is aware that Hindoos from villages near and far afield will flock thither in thousands, so he presents himself at the railway station of one of the more remote of these towns, walks into the booking-hall before the trap is opened and the apartment filled with festival-going yokels, anxious to take their tickets and secure places in the train, which they know will be crowded. Very few of these people wear coats or jackets, consequently there is a commensurate absence of pockets to be prospected; but the thief knows where the money is kept. At first he hangs on the skirts of the crowd, and devotes his attention to the later arrivals, who, after setting down their bundles and children, proceed to get their money ready to pay at the ticket window. A man reaches up to his turban, brings the end down over his shoulder, and untying the knot therein, fingers his coin. The picker is close by, and observes the glint of several rupees among the coppers; the haul is worth having, so,

to distract attention, the rogue suddenly calls out in stentorian tones to the booking-clerk—who is probably smoking inside—to hurry up and open his trap-door. Naturally, all eyes are expectantly turned on the trap, during which our friend gently takes down the turban end, which has been thrust back in its place, and with a pair of sharp scissors severs the piece in which the money is knotted, conceals it, and then pushes his way farther into the crowd. He now takes his stand by a portly Hindoo woman suckling an infant. Between the mother's supporting arm and the upper fold of her *sâdi* he espies her *pân-soopari* bag, loosely tucked in, and temptingly inviting a snatch, though he is ignorant of what it contains. The woman does not appear to have any male escort; she is evidently a stranger, and alone, for she does not converse with those around her, so the thief sees the coast fairly clear. "Do not push me so!" he loudly cries to some imaginary hustler in the throng; at the same moment—as if involuntarily—he jostles against the mother, in the act appropriates her bag, and then promptly becomes lost in the mob. In due course, after victimising a few more, he takes a ticket for Tanjore, the scene of the festival. There he mingles—intent on further depredations—in the thick of the concourse; but while he looks about him for a likely subject, he observes a commotion and hears shouts of anger a short distance off. Elbowing his way to the spot to ascertain the cause, he finds a pocket-picker, who has been caught red-handed, just being given over to the

police, who, by the way, always muster strong on these occasions. By this he gathers that members of the light-fingered gentry, other than himself, are also abroad. The capture warns our friend to be off. Who can tell but that one of his own victims, recognising him, and intuitively connecting his recent propinquity with the disappearance of knot or bag, may not denounce him? So he parts from the crowd, goes to some retired place, envelops himself in that cloth, showing only one of its colours, alters the "set" of his turban, and loosening his scalp-lock allows the hair to fall over his shoulders. Thus, effectually disguised, he waits till it becomes dark, and then reappears at the railway station as a passenger desirous of returning home. The festival ends by nine o'clock. The concourse has dispersed — the more knowing, more wealthy ones to *chuttrums* (travellers' rests) and native hotels to pass the night, the majority — the poorer and more ignorant—to flood the railway station yard, the shelters, the third-class waiting-room, and, ay, the very platforms from end to end, unaware that their trains—up and down—would not come in till the morning; on learning which fact they eat whatever they may have with them, and lie down where they are. Our friend saunters about the platform, picking his way among the recumbent forms in search of a place for himself. He observes an elderly Hindoo with his family, evidently, lying on both sides of him; they look in good circumstances, for they are well dressed. By two children shifting

to the other side of the father, and the father himself moving a little, there would be room enough for the pickpocket to squeeze in between the old man and the end wall of the platform.

"*Perri-worray* (venerable person)," says the thief in the Tamil language to the old Hindoo, "will you make room for me? There is actually no space elsewhere, and the police will not allow any one to lie down towards the edge of the platform."

"Certainly," replies the unsuspecting, good-natured traveller, immediately complying with the request. "Come, lie down here. Of what town are you? Of what caste, and what name?"

"I am an inhabitant of Trichinopoly, a cultivator by caste, and my name is Worrioor Pulnyandi; but though owning four pairs of plough bullocks and ten acres of land, I am at this moment a most unfortunate man."

"I know Trichinopoly very well, and am of the same caste as yourself. Tell me, what misfortune has overtaken you?"

"Alas! some one picked my pocket in the crowd, and I have not an anna on me to pay for my train fare."

"Never mind; I dare say I have enough for that. How much is it?"

"Six annas. If you will lend me the amount I will send it to you in postage stamps directly I reach home."

"No. We are taught to help those in distress, so I do not wish you to return it." Saying which, the old man unties the knot in his turban,

and while he picks out the six annas, the thief sees there are quite five rupees of silver in the turban corner. Well, the two—lamb and wolf —sit talking and smoking for some time, during which the wife and children fall into slumber, and then the men spread their cloths, lie down side by side, and the old one is soon asleep; not so the thief. Directly the measured breathing of his benefactor proclaims him to be no longer awake, than the so-called Worrioor Pulnyandi gently draws out his neighbour's turban end, cuts off the knot with his scissors, and not content with this, he reaches over the prostrate form beside him, and abstracts the woman's *pân-soopari* bag from its place in her waist, rises silently to his feet, and vanishes.

Where the native uses pockets, the picker finds it a more difficult matter than his prototype over here does in dealing with us. On the stifling plains the native—even if he adopts our style of dress — wears no underclothing; there is nothing between the outer air and his skin except the thin material of which his garments are composed, therefore, being so susceptible to touch, the filcher must exercise the greatest caution, otherwise the victim becomes aware of the liberty being taken, and acts accordingly.

When Lenocks — a young civilian — first acquired charge of a collectorate subdivision, he pitched on one of his peons, a Hindoo named Ponnumbalum, appointed the man as his own personal orderly, his bodyguard, in fact, striking him off all other duty. Ponnumbalum did not

show while his master was engaged on official matters, but directly Lenocks dismissed the clerks, and reverted to his lounge in verandah or house, Ponnumbalum would post himself close by, but out of sight. If the master went on a round of visits, to tennis, to club, or church, the peon would shadow him, and even during a bicycle ride Ponnumbalum would follow on a bone-shaker which the young civilian purchased in the bazaar for the use of this veritable fidus Achates.

A few months after Lenocks' appointment he had to attend a big seven-day religious festival in his magisterial capacity, to see that the police did their devoir, that there was no factional disturbance, to take the necessary measures in case of a cholera outbreak, and so forth. This was his first experience of anything of the kind; not so Ponnumbalum, who—ununiformed for the occasion—grown grey in our service, well knew that pickpockets would be at the festival, and from whose depredations he resolved to guard his master. While Lenocks stood in the thick of the throng, watching the swarms of devotees pouring in and out of the great temple, Ponnumbalum stuck close behind him, keenly scanning those in the immediate entourage, for he felt sure that the solitary Englishman, with his gaping side coat-pockets would be a mark for the spoiler. Presently, Ponnumbalum noticed a man standing abreast of his master and stealthily eyeing him. Divining the individual to be a pickpocket, and that he would sidle yet closer

to his intended victim, Ponnumbalum moved nearer to his principal, and the better to guard him, put his hand over the mouth of the Englishman's pocket on that side, and which he knew contained a bag of small silver, intended by Lenocks for a scramble amongst the children of the temple officials. Hardly had the peon placed his hand thus, when he was roughly seized by two men, who, dragging their captive round before Lenocks, announced themselves as plain-clothes special constables, drafted from the district headquarters to look out for pickpockets at this festival, and that they had caught the prisoner in the very act of operating on the officer. Explanations ensued; Ponnumbalum was promptly set free; Lenocks commended the crestfallen detectives, gave them each a *douceur*, and to further demonstrate his confidence in the peon, handed into his keeping the bag of silver, his watch, and whatever other money he had about him.

CHAPTER VII

EXTORTION

The crime of extortion or illegal exaction is very rife amongst the natives of India, but it must not be confounded with bribery; for, whereas the former is a weapon employed by the strong as a means of wringing unlawful gain from the weak, the latter is the instrument of the feeble, used to win over or influence the more powerful in favour of the briber, and that, too, without any regard to justice or equity. We may take the crime of extortion as almost wholly confined to the natives. It being repugnant to our ideas, we seldom if ever hear of Europeans committing the offence. Cases may occur among the lower classes of our people in subordinate position, men on poor pay, and with families to support, or men extravagantly, viciously inclined, such as drunkards, gamblers, and the like, who, meeting with an opportunty of making a little money *sub rosa*, are tempted to seize it. Bribery, the kindred crime, will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Here, in England, the money-lender or usurer is rather looked askance at as an extortioner; but he is the pattern of moderation and fair dealing in comparison with his Indian congener, the

Sowcar. Most of these cormorants are of the *Maravadi* caste, hailing chiefly from Jodhpore, Ajmere, Jeypore, and Jessalmere, in Rajputana. They are to be found in great numbers at all large towns, civil and military cantonments, battening on the necessities of others; but there is scarcely a village without one *Maravadi* at least, who sits in his den, and, octopus-like, holds pretty nearly the whole agrarian population in his clutches. In addition to these people—who may be called foreigners to South India—the local caste of *Chettys* are money-lenders, and who rival the *Maravadi* in oppression, greed, and chicanery. All is fish that comes to the *Sowcar's* net—from civil and military officers on good pay, down to one's dog-boy on three rupees a month. There are Presidency and other banks in India, the former with branches at all the more important centres; but they are governed by inconvenient rules and regulations. They insist on security—tangible or personal—and not every one of us, who may want some ready cash, has the one to offer, or the face to beat round for the other. To illustrate the case, take Jones, a civil engineer of thirty-five, drawing seven hundred rupees per mensem. For reasons unnecessary to enter into, Jones finds himself urgently in need of a thousand rupees. He goes to the local branch of the Presidency Bank, and prefers his request to the agent, stating that he has no security of any kind to offer, but that he will give his note-of-hand, promising to repay the amount by monthly instalments of two hundred. The agent shakes his head, says he is very sorry to refuse him, but

the only terms on which the Bank could grant the loan would be on tangible security or two approved names, together with a life policy or policies covering the sum borrowed. Jones can furnish none of these. He goes away dispirited and dejected; but he must have the money, by hook or by crook, so, on reaching home, he orders his butler to fetch a *Sowcar*. The *Sowcar* is produced. Jones tells him pretty much the same that he told the Bank agent, whereupon the cunning *Maravadi*, divining that the would-be borrower is hard pressed, expresses readiness to advance the money on note-of-hand alone, but that he will have to charge interest sufficient to compensate him for the absence of security, or 1 per cent. per mensem on the total amount. Jones, in his desperation, thinks it only means fifty rupees extra with the last instalment at the end of the five months. He agrees, whereupon the *Sowcar* having, you may be sure, already ascertained the amount of Jones' income, and that he is a safe man in money matters, goes on to remark that two hundred out of his monthly seven hundred might cripple him, and as he—the *Sowcar*—prefers to grant loans for longer periods, as being more lucrative, suggests that Jones refunds by monthly instalments of fifty rupees only, thus covering twenty months, which, at 1 per cent. per mensem, works out to two hundred rupees. After cogitating awhile, Jones assents. By that time he hopes to have received his step, and, in the interim, fifty instead of two hundred rupees out of his salary, though spread over a fourfold period,

would be easier; it would only mean for him to find two hundred rupees at the close of the twenty months, which he thinks there will be no difficulty in doing. He agrees, therefore, to the *Sowcar's* terms; the latter says he will go to his *Kothi* or place of business, and soon return with the money and the bond, which he must have drawn up in English. In due course the *Maravadi* reappears, and hands the bond to Jones for perusal, then, from the folds of his waistcloth, he produces currency notes and silver. He counts down seven hundred and sixty rupees. requests Jones to see if the amount is correct, and then sign the bond.

"Seven hundred and sixty rupees!" exclaims Jones, aghast. "What do you mean? I want a thousand!"

"My lord," replies the *Sowcar* humbly, "it is always our custom to deduct interest beforehand, which in this case, at 1 per cent. per mensem on a thousand rupees for twenty months, is two hundred rupees; then cost of stamp paper, ten rupees; and writing the bond in English for your honour's convenience, ten rupees; *cherrie-merrie* (tip), and carriage-hire for me, ten rupees, and, lastly, as a thank-offering to my gods for bringing me your honour's custom, ten rupees; total two hundred and forty rupees, and there is the balance, seven hundred and sixty rupees, sir."

For a moment, Jones feels inclined to "go for" the extortioner, then he recollects Solomon's dictum that "the borrower is servant to the lender," and that "half a loaf is better

than none." He stifles his indignation, signs the bond, gathers up the money, and gives the *Sowcar* a very curt dismissal.

This *Maravadi*, who may have a dozen creditors of Jones' standing on his books, has hardly regained his *Kothi* when some lady's *ayah* comes with, say, a ring, which her mistress has commissioned her to raise money on. The ring may be worth five hundred rupees. The *Sowcar* first asks the *ayah* for her authority to pawn it. The woman produces a scrawl, worded somewhat to the following effect: "The bearer, Ammooniamah, my *ayah*, is authorised to pledge the accompanying diamond ring." Signed, "So-and-so." Having questioned the *ayah*, and identified the lady, the *Sowcar* now pretends to examine the ring more closely, and then says that he cannot advance more than fifty rupees on it, as the stones are poor and the gold inferior. Instructed to accept whatever the trinket will fetch, the *ayah* signs a paper, promising to redeem the ring in a month's time from that date, and walks off with the money. If at the end of the stipulated period the *ayah* reappears at the *Kothi* with the principal plus ten rupees interest, well and good—the ring and the pro-note are surrendered. Should the *ayah* not show, the *Maravadi* sends for her, and if she makes some valid excuse on her mistress's behalf, she is given another fortnight, coupled with an imposition of another five rupees interest, or sixty-five rupees in all. This sort of thing may be carried on for several months, till at last the *Sowcar*, losing patience,

goes to the lady and says he can wait no longer for his money. The lady states her inability to pay him, whereupon he gives up the pro-note, and the ring becomes his. Thus, the matter ends. The lady loses a valuable ornament, while the *Sowcar* makes perhaps four hundred rupees on the deal!

A native domestic servant will come to the *Kothi*, and taking the rings out of his ears, hands them to the *Maravadi*, and asks what he will advance on them. Those ear-rings are the poor boy's sole asset, and he is in dire distress. The *Maravadi*, contemptuously returning the trinkets, demands what the owner expects to raise on them. They are honestly worth thirty rupees, and the boy says he wants that sum—to be repaid by monthly instalments of five rupees. The usurer retorts by offering ten rupees, with one anna interest on every rupee per mensem. The boy expostulates, but the money-lender is inexorable; the applicant, seeing no help for it, gives in, signs a pro-note, hands over the ear-rings, and takes the money. One anna on the rupee per mensem works out to something big in the shape of interest, but the lender is master of the situation. It may be that the debt is punctually discharged; on the other hand, the borrower goes to the *Sowcar* and tells him he cannot pay up, whereat his pro-note is given back to him, while the ear-rings become the *Maravadi's* property. And so it goes on.

The extortioner is sometimes extortioned, to coin a word, hoisted with his own petard,

so to speak, in the person of the Indian hawker, —a harpy of the first water; and it is really a pleasure to see the rascal squeezed, after he has been plundering you. The individual alluded to is an itinerant merchant called *Bakkus-wallah* or box-man in the north, and *Hakur* or hawker in the south. They are much of a muchness as extortioners and villains, but we will keep to the southerner as the more amusing of the two. He peregrinates from bungalow to bungalow of the European quarter, with his wares packed in two or three huge, green Saratoga-like trunks, carried in an open bullock-cart, or on the heads of coolies, the contents consisting of wearing apparel, such as silks, satins, muslins, chintzes, tweeds, cloths, together with a vast variety of sundries, from pens, paper, pencils, perfumery, and patent medicines, to bootlaces, blacklead, and blacking. These men procure their supplies from the large shops, where auctions are frequently held, at which they buy up all kinds of trash—damaged goods and condemned invoices—for little or nothing, and these they carry about in their boxes, selling them sometimes at an enormous profit, but occasionally with a very narrow margin of gain — the former if the purchasers are new to the country, and the latter if they have some "old bird" to deal with. But these rogues are so expert in the business that whatever advantage they may lose at one house, they make up at another, and generally contrive to clear a considerable profit at the end of the day's work. The hawkers

are also employed by native Europe-shopkeepers, who pay them a certain commission on the goods sold. Usually, however, they are sole proprietors of their stock-in-trade, and wander about with it stowed in their boxes, so that they alone are interested in the disposal of their stuff, and do all that artful cunning and innate roguery can devise to achieve that end, to the greatest benefit possible — their success, as already said, depending on the Indian experience of those whom they may have to deal with. If the hawker finds he has got hold of a greenhorn, man or woman, he will boldly lie till he is blue in the face, to extort as much as he can from his simple customer, selling articles for rupees which cost him as many annas, and cheating his victim in the most barefaced manner. But if he is trafficking with an old hand he is more cautious in his proceedings, pretends to be very ill-treated, very humble, very poor, and by well-concocted falsehoods endeavours to hoodwink even the most seasoned. In his pursuit of extortion, the hawker invariably asks many times the value of any article you fancy, demeaning himself in the most abject, servile manner, so long as he gains his object. If the would-be purchaser holds out, the hawker will leave the house and return twice or thrice before agreeing to the price offered, packing and unpacking his box each time!

The South Indian hawker speaks a queer, mirth-provoking jargon of English, and is generally a fat, greasy fellow, with a keen, vulpine expression of face. Followed by his box-bearers,

or walking alongside his cart, he enters your "compound" with the greatest assurance, brings up at the porch, and whoever may be the occupants, makes his presence known by the well-known cry of "Hakur, meeum!" or "Hawker, ma'am!"

The lady thus apostrophised comes out in the verandah and invites the merchant to step up and expose his goods.

"What have you got?" demands the *Dorasani* (lady) as a preliminary, seating herself.

"All tings got, ma'am," replies the fellow glibly; "missus please see. Dress tings, writing tings, pace tings (face things, *i.e.* cosmetics and make-ups), ishoe lace, ishtay lace, babbin (bobbin), broosancome (brush and comb), ishent (scent), 'Cassurile (Macassar oil). Yevvry tings got, ma'am."

"Well, show the things," is the order.

At this he makes his men arrange the boxes around him, produces a bunch of keys, and ere applying them to the locks, he mutters a short invocation over each box, asking that he may be fortunate in the pending transaction. This done, he cracks his knuckles against his temples, and forthwith proceeds to display his stock, squatting in the midst, unwrapping each article, naming its quantity, quality, and price, expatiating on the two first, and declaring the third as far below what it should be.

The lady, indicating a certain material which the hawker asks three rupees a yard for, says, "I will take enough of this for a dress if you give it for twelve annas a yard—not a pice more!"

"No, ma'am ; I no can give!" and he sulkily rewraps the stuff in its paper. Then, after a pause, he suddenly adds, "Never mind! this first house I come, so missus can make bargain with poor man, and have for one rupee eight annas a yard."

"No!" is the peremptory reply, "twelve annas. If you are not satisfied, pack your boxes and go away. I do not want anything else."

"I poor man," presently repeats the hawker with a sigh. "What I do? No rice got to-day! Very well, take, ma'am. *Abbah Swamy!* (Oh-Lord-oh-Lord!)"

And with this pious ejaculation he measures out the requisite number of yards—a proceeding on which it behoves the purchaser to keep a strict eye, otherwise he is tricked again, for these knaves have a knack of so manipulating the yard measure that gives them two or three inches at each turn. This sleight-of-hand they look on as quite fair, and unless the buyer is alive to his own interests he will suffer, as he will find out if he has the article subsequently remeasured, the probabilities being that there is a considerable shortage. Yes, the hawker is a noted extortioner in his particular line, and will exact his pound of flesh in one way if not in another with the utmost sang-froid.

But now comes his turn. It is customary whenever a hawker sells anything to the master or mistress of a house for the servants of that house to extort from the merchant a kind of fee or percentage on the total amount of sales.

Thus, if a hawker gets ten rupees out of you, the menials—who have been watching the business from behind some corner—pounce on the vender as soon as you are out of the way, and wring perhaps half a rupee out of him as their perquisite. If the demand is acceded to without demur, nothing happens; but if there is any dispute, it often culminates in a regular stand-up fight between the domestics on one side, the hawker and his coolies on the other—the hawker denying their right to make such a levy, the servants insisting on the justice of their claim. An old Anglo-Indian relates that on one occasion his domestics actually seized hold of a hawker's boxes and swore to detain them in durance vile until he had paid the toll. But in this case the servants found to their cost that they had caught a Tartar. The merchant became perfectly furious, threw off his turban, knotted his *joottoo* or scalp-lock, girded up his loin-cloth, and lowering his head, as all natives do in an encounter, rushed frantically at the servants, butted them one after another in the stomach, and putting the whole crew to ignominious flight, walked off in triumph with his boxes.

The toll-gate is another field for the practice of extortion. These barriers are erected on the chief approaches to more important municipalities, and display a board on which is scheduled in English and the vernacular the scale of charges leviable on each class of vehicle and beast—whether of burden or otherwise. A poorly paid native official is in charge, and who occupies the hut to which the gate is attached. In the

daytime nothing can be done — there are too many people about. The gatekeeper dare not demand anything over and above the prescribed rates, which the wayfarers themselves are cognizant of, or can read on the board. But during the dead hours of the night it is different, and the gatekeeper, after carefully ascertaining that the string of laden carts seeking admittance are not in *Sircar* (Government) employ, and that the drivers are ignorant, illiterate yokels, who could not read the board even if a light were shown, coolly informs the cartmen that they must pay an extra three pice per vehicle. Though this is more than they have paid before, the additional sum is not much, so the drivers, rather than waste time in chaffering over the three pice, grumblingly submit to the impost, and get through. Say that string numbers twelve carts, and six of such strings come along in the course of the night, and three pice are extorted for every cart, that means one rupee two annas in the pocket of the extortionate gatekeeper.

At the principal entrance to a municipality in South India, some cartmen from a neighbouring village were stopped one night at the barrier, and made to pay three pice per cart extra. Again and again was this impost levied on the same men, the gatekeeper asserting that it was in pursuance of a recent municipal ruling, which would appear in due course on the printed schedule. At last the cartmen lost patience, grew suspicious, and after unloading their stuff, went to the Municipal Office and complained.

The gatekeeper was sent for, and of course swore he was guiltless of the charge; neither could the cartmen identify the suspect, who further, to establish his innocence, said that recently a respectable-looking man had begged permission to sleep in the *pyal* or verandah of the toll-gate hut for a few nights, as his own house in the adjacent village had been burned, that it was being rebuilt, and having no friends to go to, he had asked the gatekeeper to accommodate him. It must have been the stranger, affirmed the gatekeeper, who had abused his hospitality by personating him—the toll-collector—and so plundered the travellers. As the latter could not swear to the man before them as the culprit, who, they averred, was always well muffled up, the charge fell through, and the gatekeeper was told to return to his post, with a warning not to allow outsiders to sleep in his verandah again. But one member of the Board—wiser in his generation than his colleagues—smelt a rat and resolved to act for himself. After allowing sufficient interval to elapse for the matter to blow over, he made his way out of the cantonment by a circuitous route with some police, engaged half a dozen carts at a village, and taking the drivers into his confidence, told them to talk and behave like stupid yokels from some distant hamlet when they reached the toll-gate. Sure enough, on pulling up there, some one, muffled to the eyes, came out and started a conversation with the drivers, who acted their part so well as to completely deceive their interlocutor, who, before opening

the barrier, demanded an extra three pice per cart. The rest was easy. The councillor and police jumped out, seized the fellow, tore off his muffling, and flashed a bull's-eye lantern in his face, to discover no stranger, but the veritable Simon-pure in the person of the gatekeeper! It afterwards transpired that the man, being in debt, had thought of employing a little extortion to help him out of his financial difficulties.

The railway booking-clerk — if he liked — could make money by extortion. At *jutthras* or religious festivals, at *mêlas* or fairs, and other such gatherings, fully four-fifths of the assemblage are ignorant country bumpkins, who, even where a railway issues return third-class tickets, fail to take them; so, on the conclusion of the function, whatever it is, numbers have to book back to their homes. Being illiterate and not knowing the rates, the booking-clerk could easily tack on an anna or two when, through his trap-window, he recognises in the traveller a rustic more simple-looking than usual. It is almost impossible to bring this description of extortion home to the offender; for all that, it is patent to the observant outsider, who seldom if ever denounces the wrong-doing, for fear of being told to mind his own business, because an Indian Railway Administration, as a rule, plumes itself on the efficiency of its check, and the immaculateness of its employés.

The Indian postal delivery man indulges in a mild form of extortion when he sees his chance. The natives, particularly those of the domestic servant class, generally have some member of

their families who goes up-country or to Farther India, and takes service there. He dutifully remits a portion of his wages to wife or parents, who remain behind at home. These remittances are made by postal money-order, the amount being paid in at the office of issue, and advices going to the office of payment and payee. The latter, however, is not called upon to visit the post office to receive his money; it is brought to his house by the delivery postman.

"I have some money for you," says the postman significantly, calling, say, a butler aside.

"I know," replies the butler; "I received the advice by letter yesterday."

"How much?"

"Five rupees."

"Well," growls the messenger in a hectoring tone, "surely I deserve something for bringing it to you!"

The recipient-to-be, too anxious to finger the cash, and not thinking it prudent to create a fuss, and thus make an enemy of the postman, who may place difficulties in the way when further remittances come, hands him a few coppers, whereupon the money changes hands, and nothing more is said. Nor can anything be done, for the postman takes care that no witnesses are by, while the signature of the recipient on the money-order form testifies to his having paid the amount.

While a bachelor and serving at Madras, I had in my employment a pariah cook named Swamyveram, on eight rupees a month. Al-

though somewhat green to the country at the time, I soon ascertained on good authority that Swamyveram cheated me in almost every item of the daily expenses. Sober as a judge would the fellow, after breakfast, read out the account to me, wherein he coolly added on to the prices he had paid in the bazaar. Being an excellent cook, never drunk, and always punctual, I was loath to dismiss him, and bore with his extortion for about nine months, during which he frequently pestered me to increase his wages, a request I met by promising him an advance directly I obtained my own step. Then one day, at the expiry of those nine months, Swamyveram—after rendering his account, to the usual exorbitant tune—inquired in his broken English, "When master getting mosun (promotion)?"

"Can't say, cook. Why do you ask?"

"'Cos I poor man, sar; eight rupees not 'nupp (enough). I got plenty silder (children), an' nudder (another) coming soon."

"I am sorry for you. Well?"

"Master please givee (give me) ten rupees now; not wait por mosun (for promotion)."

"Couldn't afford it, cook; besides, I'm sure you make quite two rupees a month profit in the account, so what have you to complain of?"

"That true word, sar; I seating (cheating) master more two rupees a month."

"You rascal!" I exclaimed, staring at him. "How dare you confess it?"

"Master no (don't) get yangry (angry), sar," whined Swamyveram. "Ip (if) master givee

ten rupees, I saving master more money in 'count."

"How do you mean?" I demanded, mystified.

"I not liking seat master. 'Nudder ting (another thing), ip (if) bazaar-man know I getting ten rupees pay, he givee more credit. So ip (if) master paying me two rupees more, master saving plenty money in 'count, and that bazaar-man not bathering (bothering) me."

I saw the man's drift, and made the experiment, with the result that my daily account appreciably fell, and, concurrently, Swamyveram began visibly to put on flesh.

CHAPTER VIII

BRIBERY

INDIA is, *par excellence*, the land of bribery, and the natives are second to none in the employment of the practice. For the reason that now and again an instance does come to light of some stray white man being unprincipled enough to yield to the allurement of bribery, our Hindoos and Mahomedans believe that at bottom we are all of the same mind. Presumably, we are not. We consider the acceptance of a bribe as dishonourable, nay, criminal—so does the Government; it has no mercy on the *rishwuth khanây-wâllâh* (bribe-taker), and promptly gets rid of him directly he is found guilty. One would be inclined to think, then, that with all this against it, bribery had died out, or been stamped out by now. Were it so, why do these sops continue to be thrown in our way—and that, too, oftener than it is pleasant to contemplate? "Where there is smoke there is fire;" hence the natural deduction that the offering by interested natives of bribes, and their acceptance by those of us—even in superior and responsible positions—who ought to shun them, is still very rife in the country, to a greater extent than the powers that be have any idea of. From the days of

Clive and Hastings, down to a comparatively recent period, malversation, bribery, corruption, and kindred offences were prevalent even amongst the highest, and were literally "winked at" by the Government. Gifts of money, horses, guns, to the *Sahibs* (gentlemen), and jewellery, cows, and conveyances to their *Mem-sahibs* (ladies) used to be almost openly accepted by Europeans —official and non-official—from natives adopting this means of gaining their ends. The famous "Pagoda Tree," now looked on as mythical, was not at all so fanciful in the good old times of John Company, when the Anglo-Indian, after a lifetime passed in the East, and spent in shaking the branches of the said "Pagoda Tree," would return home, and on the strength of "the house he built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants," earn for himself the title of "Nabob" (*Nawâb*), one who had heaped together untold riches in India, and now lived on them in splendour and opulence here, in the land of his birth.

Nowadays, beyond fruit and flowers, the Government servant, civil or military, no matter where he may be on the ladder, is strictly forbidden to accept anything from a native. This does not include the offerings made you at our Christmas and New Year, or at their great festivals, such as the Mahomedan *Mohurrum*, or the Hindoo *Shivarâthree*, occasions on which you are simply inundated with cakes, sweetmeats, fruit, and garlands of flowers, from such big men as the wealthy landlord of the bungalow you occupy, the equally wealthy contractor

whom you employ on your works, down through various gradations to your crowd of domestics, with the dog-boy, aged ten, bringing up the rear, and who presents you with a lime, enveloped in gold-leaf, accompanied by an ear-to-ear grin that exposes all his white teeth in startling contrast with his swarthy or sable visage. The landlord, the contractor, and others of a like character of course make these presentations to "keep in favour" with you, and expect no pecuniary return; but the humbler, the rank-and-file, so to speak, *i.e.* the postman, the dust-man, the night-soil man, the policeman in whose beat your house is situated, the newspaper man, all the Europe-shop delivery men, and your score or so of domestics, invest from eight annas to one pie (the latter purchases the dog-boy's tinselled lime) in sweets, etc., not from purely disinterested or purely congratulatory motives, but in reality to secure a return gift from you of anything over—not under—a rupee, which you are, in a manner, bound to hand each offerer, quite irrespective of the intrinsic worth of his offertory—a paying investment for the poorer of them. This, though, is a travesty of bribe-giving and taking; now to deal with the serious side of the question.

The cantonment authorities decide to make a new road—an extra feeder, perhaps, to the railway station, or to join up some rising suburb. The engineer, with theodolite, chain, and flag-men, commences marking out. The natives occupying houses and lands on the route-to-be assemble and watch the proceedings with interest

and misgiving, for although it is well known that those whose property may be interfered with by the new road will receive compensation, they are nevertheless ill at ease; they wish to keep their belongings inviolate; they fear more encroachment to come. In the course of the preliminary survey, flags are planted on a certain bit of ground, whereupon a man—the proprietor—steps forward and implores the engineer to deflect the line so as to spare his parcel of land. The engineer shakes his head, and says he is sorry to refuse. The owner continues his entreaties, till at length, realising that the engineer cannot, or, as he thinks, will not yield, he misjudges the officer's motive for being thus obstinate, so he significantly and meaningly whispers, "I will come and visit your honour this evening," saying which he hurries away. This mysterious intimation puzzles the Englishman, for he has not been very long in the country, and is yet unversed in the wiles and artifices of its people. However, sure enough, the man presents himself at the engineer's bungalow late that night, and asks to see the master in private. He does see the master in private, and the visitor, after vainly renewing his prayer, produces from his waistcloth a bag, and mutely holds it out towards the engineer. "What for?" queries he in astonishment, for the "chink" of coin has betrayed the nature of its contents. "For you, sir," murmurs the tempter. "Take it, and move your flags so as to avoid my land." If that engineer is not dead to the sense of honour, he will order, perhaps kick, the man out of the

room ; if he is untroubled with a *mens conscia recti*, he yields, takes the money, and the next morning the flags are shifted.

During one of the great cotton crises, Bombay —the chief Indian emporium for the commodity— was thrown into a state of financial convulsion. Every merchant, from the greatest to the least, was seized with a perfect craze for making money, and as time was all important, they did their business mostly by wire. There were no "rings" or "combines" or "trusts" or "corners." Every man, every firm fought for himself or itself, and it was a case of "diamond cut diamond" all round, therefore, it became a matter of vital consequence to merchants A, B, or C to know what merchants D, E, or F were doing, and *vice versa* ; while the whole body of speculators, depending so much on the wires for the carrying on of their transactions, it goes without saying that just at that juncture the telegraph possessed more than ordinary significance for every native on the island interested in cotton. The spirit of rivalry, a greed of gain, a financial *gaudium certaminis*, induced the more desperate and unscrupulous of these speculators to sound the telegraph people as to whether, for pecuniary consideration, they would disclose the nature of news received or sent by opposition firms or individuals. At the outset, attempts were made to tamper with the subordinate staff of signallers — the bribes held out being substantial sums in hard cash. But the signallers were not altogether to be depended upon, and one, it is believed,

who was convicted of corresponding with a cotton dealer, received his summary dismissal—a measure which had such a wholesome effect on all, that the bribers could do nothing, even with the most shaky and wavering of them. Finding the subordinates now altogether unnegotiable, the would-be "palm-greasers" essayed to corrupt the officer in charge. He, while really proof to their designs, pretended a readiness to fall in with their views, and some one, either in or outside the telegraph office, made it generally known in the native cotton business quarters that Mr. R——, the superintendent in charge, was inclined to divulge "cotton news" if it was made worth his while. So R—— was soon overwhelmed with applications, accompanied with offers of money from A, B, or C, if R—— would tell him the contents of wires received by D, E, or F, and so on *ad nauseam*. As R—— afterwards said, if he had accepted even a moiety of what was promised him, he could have "chucked" the Service, gone home, built a house, and lived a gentleman at large for the rest of his life.

H——, the telegraph man already alluded to in these pages, had a queer experience connected with bribery. On the outskirt suburbs of G——, a big Mahomedan city, he was engaged in improving a faulty piece of alignment in the telegraph, which necessitated the crossing of a road. His operations were closely watched by the Moslem villagers, who, when they perceived by the position of the marking flags that the said road would be crossed by the wires, set up

a murmuring, but not loud enough for H—— to catch the purport of. However, he went on with his work, and presently, after a consultation among them, several villagers ran off *ventre à terre* to a superior house some distance away. Anon a mounted man issued from the gates of the house, came galloping up, dismounted, and leading his horse, approached H——. After making a low salaam (obeisance), the rider—a Moslem—asked the officer if he intended crossing the road with the wires, because in that case his master, *Nawâb* N—— A—— K——, begged that he would not do so.

"Why not?" demanded H——.

"Because, sir," replied the emissary, "the *Nawâb* uses this road when he daily goes in his carriage to and fro yonder place of prayer," pointing to a building with two lofty minarets in the opposite direction.

"Well, the wires will swing high enough to more than clear his carriage," retorted H—— curtly.

"It is not that, sir; the *Nawâb* has religious objections to pass under the wires when he goes to pray."

"Very sorry," answered H——. "Such a reason would not be entertained for a moment by Government if you put it to them. The wires have a right to go anywhere, and I cannot on my own responsibility commence the work over again for so trivial a cause. The *Nawâb*, being a true believer, should not be so superstitious."

The man went away crestfallen, and H——, thinking the matter ended, resumed operations,

for everything had been at a standstill during the colloquy. Then, presently, a pair-horse carriage bowled out of the gates and came towards him. There was only one occupant, which proved to be the *Nawâb* N—— A—— K—— himself.

"Salaam, *Sahib!* (Good morning, sir!)" he cried in Urdu, without alighting, as the carriage drew up by H——'s side. "May I speak to you?"

"Certainly!" replied the latter, returning the salaam, and approaching the carriage, for he saw that the *Nawâb* was a feeble old man.

"Is it that you cannot or will not comply with my request—just delivered to you by my messenger?"

"Cannot," said H—— laconically.

"With due deference to your veracity, I find that hard to believe. May I ask what pay you are drawing?"

"Four hundred rupees (then £40) a month."

"Well," continued the nobleman, producing a paper from his pocket and tendering it to H——, "will this persuade you to change your mind?"

The Englishman, without taking the paper, glanced at it, which, to his astonishment, proved to be a currency note for five hundred rupees!

"There is more than a month's pay," resumed the *Nawâb*; "keep it, and do not cross the road with the wires."

"No, thank you," replied H——, after recovering from his surprise; "I am not in the habit of accepting bribes. On the other hand,

as I judge your anxiety to have the road clear by the amount of money you are prepared to pay, I will stretch a point in your favour and comply with your wishes. Good morning to you ! ”

As H—— described, that *Nawâb's* face was a study !

CHAPTER IX

MENDACITY

THE scathing denunciation, "All men are liars," is specially applicable to the native of India, high or low, rich or poor, Moslem or Hindoo. The political records of Government—from John Company's days—can give many an instance of bad faith among the aristocracy and higher grades, while as for the *oi polloi*, there is not one of us who, after even a few months' sojourn in the country, will not but admit that they are liars of the first water. There are rare exceptions, while as to whatever other virtues they may possess, one individual out of a thousand has not any conception of or respect for the truth.

Now, as a rule, the Englishman, when he prevaricates, equivocates, or tells a deliberate lie, will blush, look guilty, stammer, drop his eyes, or exhibit uneasiness in some other manner, and the chances are that, on finding himself cornered, he will confess to his falsehood as the quickest way out of the dilemma. Not so the native of India. His complexion—ranging from coffee-yellow to negro-black—does not allow of his colouring up, that is, visibly, although some authorities assert that with him a sickly

green or greyish tinge does duty for the roseate hue which an accusing conscience drives into our cheeks; and the question consequently presents itself whether the native is provided with that troublesome still-voiced monitor. It is not so much "brass," effrontery, or hardihood that causes him to look you straight in the face and lie; it is a part of his nature, and all the teaching in the world will not cure him of the vice. Mendacity, in his idea, is no crime; nay, he regards it as "slimness," a virtue, in fact, so long as it serves his turn. Shakespeare's admonition, "To tell the truth and shame the devil," though a household word with us, comes nowhere into his creed. Self-interest is the grand lever towards falsehood. To attain their object, whatever it is, to shield themselves or their friends from punishment or loss, they will lie like the proverbial tooth-drawer, no matter if the said object at stake be large or small; to save the situation they will not hesitate to resort to untruth. On the other hand, one native will not lie to protect another if enmity exists betwixt the two; in which case he will condescend to the truth, and that, too, with an air of having made a great concession in your favour. One lie begets another, and he will stick to a whole tissue of them through thick and thin. "Liars ought to have good memories," says some one. The native *has* a good memory indeed, for the misstatements he gave utterance to when you perhaps may have been holding a preliminary inquiry, he will repeat, first to the police, and again later on in a court of justice,

for no argument, no threat, no persuasion will shake him. An Englishman may lie, but if you put him on his oath he will, unless a very hardened criminal, break down, and rather than commit a perjury, own himself beaten. The native will swear to a lie by every god he worships, and the only ordeal of the kind that will induce him to unsay a lie is to swear him on "Ganges water." An officer of native infantry, going his day rounds on foot, and happening to use a short cut from one guard to another, came on a Hindoo sepoy sentry lying on his back, snoring, with his musket on the ground beside him. Stealing into the adjacent guardroom he summoned the *havildar* or sergeant commanding the guard, enjoined silence, and, taking him with him, pointed out the offender. The *havildar* admitted the sentry to be asleep. They awoke him, but when they accused the fellow of slumbering on his post, he stoutly repudiated the charge, asserting that he merely lay down for a moment to scratch his back, which was itching him. The kind-hearted officer —wishing to give the delinquent a chance— reasoned with him; the *havildar* abused him in the vernacular, but to no purpose. Then the officer asked the man if he would swear by his gods that he was *not* asleep, whereupon he promptly took the oath, much to the Englishman's disgust. Indignant at hearing such rank perjury, the officer was about having the culprit put in confinement, when; happening to look round, he saw, passing along the road, a string of *Byragees* or Hindoo devotees, pilgrims from

North India, each man carrying two large pots slung at the ends of a bamboo borne across the shoulder. The pots contained Ganges water, which the travellers were taking to the famous Ramaisweram temple at the extreme southern end of the peninsula, there to pour the holy water over the idols, as an expiation for sins. Calling to the pilgrims, the officer described what had occurred, and asked them to let the offending sepoy take the oath on the sacred fluid. The *Byragees* readily agreed, but the sentry declined, and finally admitted that he had been asleep!

To save himself exertion, exposure, or discomfort, even the man you have to place confidence in, the man grown grey in the Government Service, will lie without compunction, and may put you in a very awkward predicament, as the following incident will show. While H—— held charge of the Government Telegraph Stores, an important branch of his duties consisted in the electrical testing of insulator cups prior to their being cemented to iron stalks, after which a final test would be taken, when those found perfect would be packed for future issue whenever required. H—— had a large establishment under him at the Store Dépôt—a big pile of buildings once used as a reformatory. The insulator cups and their stalks came out direct from home by sea; the latter required no particular attention, but the former had first to be visually examined by H——, seconded by half a dozen sharp-eyed native assistants, when such blemishes as cracks, breaks, chips,

flaws, holes, bad glaze, were sure to be discovered. This preliminary accomplished, the outwardly sound cups were soaked in water for a few days, and then subjected to electrical test by means of a highly sensitive reflecting galvanometer and a powerful battery of a hundred cells, carefully kept up to the working standard. The testing apparatus was located in a darkened room in a quiet part of the premises on the upper floor, and outside, in the open courtyard below, stood a shallow wooden trough on trestles. The trough was lined with zinc, and large enough to hold two hundred cups in rows of ten, head down in water reaching to just short of the rims. Each cup, quite separate from its neighbour, contained a loose, galvanised iron stalk; insulated copper wire "leads" from the testing galvanometer came down to the trough, one soldered to the zinc lining, and the naked end of the other would be applied by a man to each stalk, thus completing the metallic circuit, while H—— in the dark room above noted the deflection of the galvanometer needle. As the manipulator below gave his touches he would bawl out the numerals from one to ten, repeating them for every row, and preserving the contact till H—— answered with the corresponding number, which was the signal for the man to go to the next. Should the needle in any case deflect beyond a certain given limit, the cup in question would be taken out and set aside as electrically defective. When the two hundred cups had thus been treated, and all doubtful ones eliminated, the stalks of those remaining would be

joined up with thin, naked copper wire, and subjected to a resultant test. If the aggregate came within the minimum, that batch of cups would be cemented to their stalks, which, when set, the finished article would undergo a final test, and so passed for use on working wires. These particulars—tedious, perhaps, except to the professional reader—are given to describe the intricacy of the operation, and how much depended on the fidelity of the man at the trough.

H—— having just constructed a short local line, erected on it some of the very insulators he had recently tested in the manner above described; but when, on completion, he tested that line for electrical efficiency, he was astonished to find that it fell far short of perfection. He went over his calculations again, and repeated the test, but with the same disheartening result. The insulators must be faulty; no other cause suggested itself. The line was single, only six miles long, and absolutely free of leaf or other contact to account for the evident leakage of current. As H—— ruminated over the mystery, a possible solution suddenly occurred to him like an inspiration, and he resolved to follow it up; he had time to do this, as the new line was not to be put into circuit for some days, so, without divulging anything to his workpeople, he had the wire shifted to the brackets, the insulators carefully unshipped, repacked, and taken back to the Store Dépôt. On going there the next day, H—— found two letters from other subdivisional officers

complaining of faulty insulators which he, H——, had last issued to them. Making no sign, he went to the testing-room, and when all was ready, gave the word to start touching; but instead of keeping at the galvanometer, observing the deflection on the scale, he stole on tiptoe to the closed venetian, and modulating his voice in repeating the numbers to make it appear as if coming from his usual position, he peeped through an interstice that commanded a view of the courtyard below.

Parenthetically be it said that the head lascar who habitually presided at the insulator trough was absent on three months' leave, and that his deputy acted for him. H—— could rely on the former, but he had no confidence in the latter, and he would have placed some one else at the touching had not the work been of a special nature, which the deputy had learnt from his chief, and so carried on. The testing had necessarily to be done during the hottest part of the afternoon, when the sun blazed directly on the courtyard and the trough. Add to this the thermometer hovering on the century, and it will be understood that hanging over that exposed trough for the hour together was no easy or pleasant task—even for a sun-baked native. Well, H—— saw the charged trough—without a soul near it. The "one," "two," "three" floated up right enough, but the utterer—who ought to have been at the trough, touching the stalks with his lead—imagining that H—— pored over the galvanometer, was comfortably seated in the shade of the verandah

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pillar, droning out his numerals—with the lead lying by his side! No wonder those insulators were faulty! Dashing open the window-shutter, H—— shouted at the man, and demanded what he meant by such conduct. The fellow had the assurance to say that up to the moment before he had been at the trough, but seeing a scorpion by the verandah pillar, he had just stepped aside—to try and kill it!

Another very common form of lying is the trumped-up excuse—put forward to obtain an indulgence, or as a shield for dereliction of duty; and it is perfectly marvellous how the native, on the spur of the moment, without any warning, will conjure up a falsehood to his lips in self-justification. An official drawing a good salary, desirous of a day's informal absence from duty, will submit a written explanation to his European superior, stating that urgent private affairs prevent him from attending office, but that he will certainly be at his post on the morrow. The reason advanced may be within the bounds of truth, but if it could be analysed, the chances are that the absentee has received a visit from the partner in his investments, with whom he wants to go over books and discuss money matters; or some friend having unexpectedly arrived from a far country, he wishes to stay at home and dispense to his guest the honours of hospitality. Another—a Mahomedan—will say that, having suddenly remembered that this was the day to make offerings (*Fatehah*) at the tomb of some saint, or grave of some departed relative, he has taken the liberty of absenting himself to

perform his religious devoir. The average Mahomedan is passionately addicted to cock-fighting. Applicant had probably heard overnight that an important main was to be held on the morrow, and wishing to be present, he imposes on your credulity with his *Fatehah* story, whereas, there he is seated among the crowd round the cock-pit—in full enjoyment of the cruel spectacle. Another man will send his son to inform you that his *Iyah* or father saw the evil eye during the night, and that the women of the household are so alarmed that he must remain at home that day—to comfort and reassure them.

So much for your official subordinates; now for your servants, as a class—full of mendacity as an egg is full of meat, and who chiefly put forward some family exigency to hoodwink you and suit their purpose. A "boy" comes to you, shedding crocodile tears, and unable to articulate. You ask him what is the matter, when, pulling himself together, he tells you, with much sobbing, that his grandmother is dead, and he wants a day's leave to attend her obsequies. You grant the request; he makes a profound salaam or obeisance and sneaks out of the gate—carefully maintaining an appearance of woe while he is within your sight. In a fortnight's time that very "boy" will repeat the experiment, going through the same performance, though with the variation that it is his grandfather who has yielded up the ghost this time. The old man, he explains, was very much attached to his wife, and grief at her loss has

killed him. Again you grant the leave applied for, and you think nothing more of the matter till, after a hiatus of a few weeks, the identical "boy" tells you that death has again been busy in his house, and has just carried off his mother. By now your suspicions are aroused. You privily communicate them to the police and request them to make inquiries; they do so, and you learn that neither the grandmother, nor the grandfather, nor the mother of that "boy" has gone the way of all flesh yet, that they are hale and hearty, and that the stories of their consecutive demises are arrant falsehoods, invented solely to allow of the inventor attending some *tamashas* or merry-makings in the bazaar that synchronised with the dates on which the young liar put in his several applications.

Fever is a great expedient, and responsible for a monstrous number of falsehoods. In India, fever is endemic, and your servants are very prone to conjure up the disease as a means suitable to gain their ends, either to obtain leave of absence or to avoid punishment for shortcomings in their duties. If your bath-tub is not filled at the proper time, and no other excuse presents itself, the waterman will say that he had fever. If you find a long black hair in your curry, and you call the cook, exhibit the filament and scold him for allowing such an unappetising "foreign body" to appear in your food, he will promptly snatch off his *puggree* or turban, and pointing to his close-cropped tonsure, demand, with an air of offended dignity, how

that hair—perhaps twelve inches long—can be brought home to him. Asked if he can account for it, he will probably blame the *Thunnikurrsee* or waterwoman, whose business it is to reduce the curry-powder to a paste by wetting and grinding it on a stone. Now, you have been able to notice that all that day nothing has been wrong with the woman ; she has gone about her duties as usual, and even at that moment, while you are interviewing the cook, you hear her voice, chatting and laughing with the *ayah*, who always steals off to the outhouses at meal-times. So that the *Thunnikurrsee* receives no warning, you yourself rise, go into the back verandah, and call her by name. The cachinnation immediately ceases, and the woman, running across, presents herself before you with a demure grin of inquiry on her face. You tax her about the hair ; you show it to her—held up on a fork. She sees no loophole, so at once, assuming a look of concern, she says that she has been suffering from fever all day, and very possibly the hair did fall from her head, which, owing to her illness, she did not notice, and so it became mixed up in the curry-stuff ! She will tell this fearful " fib " without blinking !

Those who live out send some relative to report their seizure by fever ; but with those that live on your premises it is a more difficult affair. The butler reports that So-and-so is lying in his godown in the throes of the preliminary ague. You go and have a look at him. There he is, enveloped in his tattered blanket, and shaking quite to the manner born. You

do not care to touch him—for many reasons, but you see, and you think that the poor fellow is really sick. You offer him quinine, cinchona, or diaphoretic mixture. He accepts with every appearance of gratitude, but after swallowing the medicine, with still chattering teeth he will beg permission to go home, where, he says, his mother will nurse him. On your acquiescing to such a natural arrangement, he totters to his feet, gathers his blanket toga-wise around him, and staggers out of the compound, keeping up the cheat so long as he is within your ken; but no sooner he believes he is out of it, he rolls up his blanket, shoulders it, and proceeds gaily on his way, laughing in his sleeve. All lies. He has no more fever than you have, but he simulates illness with wonderful accuracy, and only a qualified medical man could prove him a liar and malingerer.

The converts — Protestant and Roman Catholic—furnish the only exceptions to any appreciable extent to the universal weakness for mendacity exhibited by your servants. The Protestant, while fairly truthful, will lie when hard pressed, but he will generally come and confess when his conscience pricks him. The Roman Catholic, however, has the advantage over the Protestant as regards excuses for getting away — in the number of his saints' days. Scarcely a week elapses without your Roman Catholic servants asking leave to attend church, and the only safeguard against this is to call on the priest, and beg him to supply you with a list of those saints' days whereon your valet,

Henrico, or, as they call it, Arokyamswamy, cook, Sabastian or Suvvuthien, *ayah*, Mary or Murriammah, should appear at the church. For their one or two a week, his Reverence will probably name not more than one or two a month of such attendances, which he ticks off on a printed calendar, and hands to you for your future guidance. When you return home, summon the trio above named, and describe the result of your visit to Father Rodriguez, they look foolish, and, in their hearts, may anathematise that priest for an imbecile. Unfortunately, there is but one Roman Catholic church and one priest in the station, otherwise your three converts would thenceforth transfer their worship to another.

The following is a curious case of false modesty or ultra-respect for the European as a motive for persistent lying. The W——s, a young couple—lately married—were moved from South to North India. Mrs. W—— knew not a word of any vernacular, her short residence in the country having hitherto been confined to the Madras Presidency, where every native almost understands English, and speaks it with mirth-provoking fluency, therefore, it is not absolutely imperative to study the languages, whereas, in Northern India it is just the reverse ; you have to pick up their tongue—Hindee or Oorrdoo (Urdu)—because you seldom if ever find a native domestic acquainted with English. W——, *au fait* at both dialects, experienced no difficulty in his new surroundings, but his wife was dreadfully handicapped, and he became a

peripatetic interpreter in consequence. During the earlier days following their shift, in addition to doing the translation in the house, it was no uncommon occurrence for W——, while away at his office down in the cantonment, to receive sundry written communications from his wife —one, asking him to tell bearer—the *dhobie* or washerman—not to put so much starch in this garment, or more in that; another, brought by the *khalifah* or cook, to whom the wretched W—— would have to differentiate betwixt loin chops and neck chops; a third, the tailor, who had to be informed what his mistress meant by unbleached calico in distinction to long-cloth, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Their new *khansamah* or butler was a Mahomedan named Ally Khan—an excellent servant, with first-rate testimonials, and thoroughly up in his work, but lacking in one great desideratum—a knowledge of English. Not an intelligible word could pass between him and the lady; all the talking devolved on W——, and during his absences in the district—whither she could not accompany him just then—the poor girl had to resort to dumbshow and pantomime in her intercourse with the domestics, exasperating as it was unsatisfactory. Over and over again, under pressure from his wife, would W—— ask the butler, "Do you mean to say you cannot speak a word of English, Ally Khan? All our servants in Mundiraj (Madras) understood it."

"My lord," he would reply, joining his hands in the fashion prevalent up there, "in Hindustan it is considered disrespectful for us to

speak English to the *Huzoor logue* (governing race). They learn our tongue, your honour; we poor *ghoolams* (slaves) know nothing of English."

This was an accepted fact, with which W—— was acquainted, for he had served in this part of the country on a previous occasion. Well, things went on thus for several months, till one day, while on business at the railway station, and a train was halting there, W—— came across a British soldier passenger, from whom he bought a talking parrot — cage and all. Carrying the bird home, he exhibited it to his wife, much to her delight, and as the cage wanted cleaning badly, he summoned Ally Khan, and told him to have the needful done. The butler took up the cage, and while walking away with it, he fairly staggered the W——s by apostrophising the parrot in fluent English!

"Pretty Polly, pretty dear!" cried the villain. "Tea and toast for pretty Polly! Polly sick! Call the doctor!"

"You *jootmoot*!" (liar) ejaculated W——, as soon as he recovered from his astonishment. "How is it you can talk English to the parrot, when you have repeatedly told me you do not know a word? Come, now, confess, you *can* speak English."

"If the *Huzoor* will pardon the disrespect, I own that I do know it, my lord."

He was one of the exceptions. Polly's advent had broken the ice, and Ally Khan overcame his diffidence. Mrs. W——, for her part,

gradually picked up a smattering of Hindee, so in due course, what with a little of the one language here, a little of the other there, she was able to converse not only with Ally Khan, but her other servants as well.

CHAPTER X

BEGGARS AND BEGGAR-FAKING

MALTA, Naples, Constantinople, and some others are places on this side of the world where beggardom flourishes, where the cadging fraternity show in force and play their parts with more or less impudence. This may be; but for aggressively importunate beggars and unblushingly audacious beggar-faking, the palm must be given to the mendicant of India, because, out there, he is under no restriction, the police not even applying the "move-on" order, while the beggar has no need to disguise himself as a vender of shoe- or boot-laces, matches, pinchbeck collar-studs, flowers, and such-like commodities, as he is allowed to do in this country. For example, in greater London, begging has been reduced to a fine art. Occasionally you encounter it in its crude form, when the beggar, seeing the coast clear of policemen, will ask of you an alms in the shape of a copper, for himself, or for a hungry, starving family, or to make up the price of a railway ticket to carry him home, whence he has strayed far afield, he says, in search of work, but which copper, if bestowed, is generally spent on drink at the nearest public-house. No, the mendicant

is not openly aggressive here. He may dolefully sing in the streets, murdering some sweet melody of old, such as "Annie Laurie," etc., or he may rap at your side-door, ostensibly to offer for sale some not-wanted trash to your servants, but generally to end up in a request for coppers or something to eat. The most objectionable of this class of pest is the gipsy crew, escorting a rattle-trap van, dragged by a shaggy pony or shaggier donkey. Oh, the exploded romance of Romany! What a rude awakening from childhood's cherished notions of gipsy life and gipsies! If an artist, the copper-sleuth can picture the pavement stones with coloured chalk drawings, frequently of real merit, and collect a quantity of halfpence thereby. If halt or maimed, deaf, dumb, or blind, the afflicted one can stand at a corner, or by the curb in mute appeal, but must not ask for money; and if disfigured by any unsightly affection, the eyesore must be concealed from, not exhibited for, the public sympathy.

Beggars—pure and simple, without any rubbish for sale—do not invade your premises here, at least, they are supposed not to, because it is a punishable offence; but in India they are permitted to do so. While a certain section confines itself to the bazaars and native town, another—most of whom possess a grotesque smattering of English—make the European quarter their hunting-ground, and unless you post a *durwân* or janitor at the gate, to drive them away, a succession of miserable, verminous wretches will thrust themselves on you every

day, the more especially if you establish a reputation for promiscuous almsgiving.

The South Indian beggar, with a genuine or faked infirmity, generally appeals to the master of the house as persistently as the hawker alluded to in Chapter VII addresses himself to the mistress. He will enter the gate, slink up to the porch, and whether he sees you or not, will lugubriously cry out, "Good morning, sar! Poor man, no rice, sar!" supplementing the last statement with a resounding slap on his stomach, indicative of the vacuity existing in that all-important receptacle. Very likely he will add, "Plenty little little silder (children) got, sar!" as an additional incentive to you to listen to his prayer.

There was—and may be still—a one-legged, old pariah fellow in Madras who would come on crutches, and under the convoy of a white-haired woman—his wife. Pausing at the gate, he would proclaim his presence by bawling out in nasal, sing-song tones, "Good morning, sar! I poor cook, sar! I going to the Bengal pight (fight, Indian Mutiny) with General Whitlock, sar! One gumpall (gunball, cannon shot) cutting arp (off) leg, sar! I very hanisht (honest) man, sar!"

"Yes, sar! Good morning, sar!" the attendant crone would add, pointing to her companion. "He poor man, my hujjibun (husband), sar! He never drinking, never beejing (abusing) me, sar! He no ishtrang (strong), sar; no can bite the rice! He getting bad peebur (fever), sar; that why only done tumble down

the toot!" meaning that her husband had lost his teeth from malarial fever, and was consequently unable to masticate his food.

With regard to this particular case, be it mentioned *en passant* that the self-styled "Mutiny veteran" never went with Whitlock's column, subsequent inquiry eliciting the fact that the man lost his leg while employed on the railway, and that, too, years after the great rebellion.

Those beggars who frequent the Europe-shop quarter are noisy and troublesome enough; but the crippled mendicant who takes up a pitch under some avenue tree, and bawls out his appeal with unceasing, harrowing monotony in the vernacular is a veritable affliction to one's sensibilities. An Irish engineer named M—— describes how, while stationed at Madras, a legless and armless native—carried in a sheet slung hammock-wise to a bamboo by two men—was daily deposited close to the engineer's office. Though deprived of limbs, the deficiency was more than compensated for by an unusually strong, raucous voice, and the impotent's sempiternal appeal to the passers-by of "*Maharajah marai! Dhurrmum koodthootoo pongullay, Iyah!* (Noble lords! Bestow your charity before you pass me, sirs!)" wracked the poor Irishman to the verge of distraction—like a restless spirit fretting in its pain. He suffered the nuisance till he could stand it no longer, so he had the limbless creature carried in to his office, and there covenanted with him for a rupee per mensem if he would shift elsewhere, any-

where, so long as it took him out of earshot. The cripple agreed, and never troubled M—— again, except to appear regularly on the first of the month for the stipulated allowance. The pitch that had been vacated, however, was considered a superior one, in a crowded part of George Town—then called Blacktown—where four roads met, and which had been similarly occupied before M—— came to Madras, so it was not long ere another helpless being—worse as regards lung-power than the first—established himself on the same spot. But the Irelander did not see his way towards subsidising more of the species, so, steeling his heart this time—for he was an easy-going character—he promptly complained to the Divisional Magistrate of the nuisance, and had the newcomer summarily removed.

Elephantiasis is a disease common to both coasts of South India and Ceylon. The term is derived from *elephas*, the Greek for elephant; and apparently the disorder is peculiar to the natives, cases of European sufferers being seldom if ever heard of. Some authorities regard the affection as a kind of leprosy. It attacks the lower limbs — the legs, from the knee downwards, and feet, which swell to a huge size: the skin thickens, hardens, and becomes insensible. It is supposed to be chronic and incurable, but it is not catching, while it does not interfere to any great extent with the other bodily functions. A true case of elephantiasis is a pitiable sight; the leg—from the knee—swells to elephantine proportions; the foot—a shape-

less mass—is covered with an enormous quantity of flesh or adipose-like growth, while the well-nigh smothered toes—or, rather, what can be seen of them—have the appearance of large red potatoes. It is heart-rending to note how the miserable sufferer drags this heavy and painful encumbrance along with him. Various are the causes assigned for the malady. Some attribute it to the water; some to the fish diet on which the poorer natives of both coasts principally subsist; while others say that it is inherited in the blood, and descends from generation to generation.

Elephantiasis—because so pitiable to behold—is more likely to stir charitable feelings in our breasts than any of the other diseases or malformations which daily meet the eye in India, so, as a consequence, this ailment is often counterfeited. In genuine instances the swollen limb is swathed in rags, leaving uncovered the foot with its reddish purple toes peeping out. Well, the faker winds rags upon rags round a leg and foot till both present the requisite thickness. Thus got up, he will hobble into your gate at dusk, and after attracting your attention to his malady, whine for coppers. You may or may not remark the swathing of the lower extremity, which is generally left bare. If you say anything, he will tell you that he is applying medicine to the foot, hence the reason of his covering it up. Another may come along, lying prone in a sort of hand-truck, the whole of his bad limb concealed from view. Should you ask why, he will probably inform you that the part is sloughing,

that he does not like to subject you to the gruesome sight, that, being unable to walk, he has to hire the truck, and a man to push it; but should you insist on his exposing the limb, why, then, you catch the rascal and hand him over to the police. The imposture, however, is rarely detected, as no one cares to approach even what, after all, may be a collection of abominably dirty rags. You see quite enough of the real article in the streets, especially at the Europe-shop centre, where suffering humanity musters strong, where the poor wretches hang about your very carriage step, and, exhibiting their sores and deformities, clamour importunately, till, in defence of your olfactory nerves, you throw them some money. Here you may see a dozen elephantiasis cases in all their sickening nakedness; for, though a beat or point-duty native constable may be by, who witnesses the annoyance you are undergoing, all he can do is to request the beggars to desist, because — as he tells you if asked—the Government place no restriction on begging, and he—the constable—has no authority to deal more stringently with the beggars.

Another stratagem—but not often met with —is the raw-meat trick. A man, enveloped in a grimy cloth or sheet, will approach your carriage window, and whispering that he is suffering from some obscure and incurable disease, begs for pecuniary aid. You either hurriedly motion him away, or, out of curiosity, ask the nature of his ailment. In the latter event, after glancing to the right and left, he will open his sheet just

long enough for you to catch a glimpse of what appears to be an open, angry sore on some part of his chest or stomach. He will tell you that he has been suffering from that sore for months, that, in spite of doctors and hospitals, it will not heal, that he has recently been discharged from the latter as a hopeless case, and that the ulcer is slowly but surely sapping his vitals. The chances are that you get taken in: the man studies you before preferring his prayer: if he is satisfied that you are sufficiently inexperienced—and they seldom err in their diagnoses—he will address you; but if the same instinct tells him that you are a seasoned Anglo-Indian, he will keep his distance. That cancerous-looking protuberance is nothing more or less than a bloody piece of mutton or beef, procured from the nearest butcher for a few pice, and attached by some mysterious means to the man's epidermis!

The "big-family" artifice is seldom overtly practised by the Indian Beggar, although ninety-nine out of a hundred will assert they have a quiverful of starving olive-branches at home. This is because consanguineous resemblance is stronger among Asiatics than with us; there is little chance of failing to detect the "family likeness"; so, if a man and woman come with a crowd of children, and try to pass them off as their own progeny, you can generally see through the falsity of their assertion. But what the Beggar Fake frequently resorts to as a stand-by is ophthalmia—a disease very prevalent at certain parts of the year. Having ascertained that you are a recent arrival in the country, a

beggar—accompanied by his wife and half a dozen children—will come to your bungalow with all their eyes inflamed, bloodshot, and watering copiously. Ophthalmia is raging; they have caught it, and being unable to bear the glare of the sun all day long in the bazaar streets, they make bold to pray the kind and charitable English gentleman to help them. The kind and charitable English gentleman accedes to their petition; in the innocence of his heart, and pitying their sad state, he gives the party perhaps a rupee. The sufferers go away in secret exultation. They maintain their rôle as long as they are within your ken, but no sooner out of it than they hasten to the nearest well or tank, and wash their eyes, which had been anointed with an irritant of red chilli powder—to cause them to appear as if afflicted with ophthalmia! Your own domestic servants will resort to the same means when they wish you to believe they are attacked with fever.

The genuine Blind Beggar is very common. He is generally under the leadership of a small boy, who often surreptitiously purloins a copper or two which the charitable native passers-by drop into the scallop-shell hanging from the man's neck. The real Blind Beggar is well known, and his haunts are defined; he will not exceed them. In addition to what money he collects from wayfarers, he daily makes a round of a certain part of the bazaar, where each stall-keeper puts something into the fellow's wallet, *e.g.* a handful of rice from one, a few vegetables from another, a packet of curry-seeds from a

third, while the mutton butcher will bestow some scraps of waste meat. A pretender, however, starts up now and again; but he avoids the bazaars, and confines himself to the European quarter, where he plays his part so well that he makes a good thing out of it. Once, one of these spurious Blind Beggars entered the gates of a house where a morning caller was having tea with the inmates: the guest had several dogs with him, which, on seeing the two figures coming up the drive, rushed out at them, with the result that the boy promptly dropped his charge's hand and fled, to be immediately followed by the "sightless" Beggar, who, negotiating flower-pots, shrubs, etc., in the most wonderful manner, took a short cut to the gate, and slammed it in the faces of the pursuing dogs, proving beyond question that he was far from being afflicted as he wished to make out.

Men who, through a certain disease, have lost their noses, or suffered other facial disfigurement from the same ailment, go round begging, and attributing their mutilations to any but the right cause. They take care, however, not to attempt this with medical men, who would not be hoodwinked; but when dealing with an ordinary mortal—and the rascal takes care to ascertain this beforehand—he generally tells a tale of some fierce combat with a tiger, or describes how a dog belonging to an officer—now long left the station—flew at him one night and bit his nose off as he was carrying the evening meal to his brother, the cook.

A distinguished cavalry officer, while a lieutenant, made much of a *sowar* or trooper of his corps who had saved his life in an encounter with a cheetah. The officer had gone out after "Spots," and taken the trooper with him, when the latter rescued the former from certain death. There was nothing good enough for the gallant *sowar*; the grateful Englishman heaped favours on his humble follower, including a monthly allowance of ten rupees, which, considering the man's regimental salary about equalled that amount, was no unappreciable addition to his income. All this petting and pampering, however, had the effect of turning the *sowar's* head—as over-indulgence and an excess of kindness generally do with natives. Hitherto a steady young fellow, this trooper fell away, took to dissolute habits, and contracted the disease above alluded to. After a long illness, the man came out of hospital, cured, true, but minus his nose, which had been eaten away, and of course he had to be discharged from the corps. In the meanwhile, that officer was transferred to another regiment, and after many years, during which he had seen much field service, he returned—a full-blown Colonel—to the very station he had left as a subaltern. One day, shortly subsequent to his arrival, a noseless beggar, old, purblind, and decayed, came to the Colonel's bungalow and asked an alms. The beggar was unable to recognise the officer, but the officer recognised the beggar no sooner he set eyes on him. Resolving at the outset not to

bring himself to the recollection of the mendicant, the Colonel inquired in Hindee, "How did you lose your nose?"

"Many years ago, sir," replied the man, "when I was a youth, I accompanied a young officer of my regiment out shooting. We went after a cheetah, sir, that had been committing many depredations, and which no one had yet been able to destroy. We met the animal, sir: my master fired—and missed. Before the gentleman could reload, the beast sprang on him, and had I not gone to the rescue, it would have killed my master. In the struggle, sir, the cheetah bit my nose off."

"Hyder Khan," replied the Colonel sternly, "you speak the truth so far in saying that you saved your officer's life, for I am he; but you lie in asserting that the cheetah bit off your nose—you lost it through your own fault, by catching a disgraceful disease. Even so, had you not uttered a foul falsehood just now, I would have helped you by renewing the allowance of ten rupees a month, which I paid you up to the time of my leaving this place, but I can have nothing to do with a man who can speak the untruth so deliberately and gratuitously. Go away, and never come here again!"

You may be walking or driving along, when, of two men on the roadside, one suddenly drops to the ground, while the other commences to race frantically about, yelling at the top of his voice that the devil has seized his friend; and if you halt, he implores you to tell him what to do. The prostrate man struggles and flings

himself about; to you it appears very like an epileptic fit, for, on looking closer, you notice the convulsive muscular twitching, and, above all, the foaming at the mouth. If you are a medical man you are not long in concluding that the whole affair is a fake; but if you are not a doctor, you really feel sorry for the sufferer, and ask the other man what the matter is. "Sir," he will hysterically reply, "he is my brother, and often is he thus caught by the devil that is in him, which would throw him into the fire or into the water unless some one is by. My lord, if you can cast out the evil spirit, do so!"

A safe request! You are no worker of miracles, so you tell the fellow to sprinkle the possessed's face with water, chafe his palms, and so forth, and as you have no time or inclination to stay to witness the result, you end up by doing the very thing for which the little burlesque is got up—you bestow a rupee, and advise the sound man to hail a bullock-cart and take his brother to the hospital. You go away; but if you were provided with eyes at the back of your head you would be rather astonished to see him with the devil seated up, and in his right mind, grinning, in company with his "brother," and spitting out the soap-nut wherewith he had filled his mouth to produce the foaming, which struck you as the most convincing symptom of the "epileptic's" malady.

Some of our ladies, when they first come out to India, are full of eleemosynary intent towards the natives, especially wives of mission-

aries, who, hot from the teaching of the schoolroom and Mission seminary, think it a part of their calling to dispense ghostly counsel, coupled with charity, to the heathen, more so the poor heathen. In pursuance of her scheme, the young, newly wedded, newly arrived labourer in the vineyard will encourage the more necessitous to confide their troubles to her, when she promises to see what she can do to help them; but at the same time she makes them to understand not to expect pecuniary aid from her, that being a department dealt with by the missionaries—among them her husband, perhaps—from the Society's Poor Fund. She names an hour in the morning when she will hold herself at their disposal. At the outset, these séances are meagrely attended, for, "lo, you," say the poor, "what is the use of troubling the *Dorasani* (lady), when she has plainly given out that she will not help us with money or food?" However, to those who do come, she gives advice and comfort, all with the aid of an interpreter, until she picks up the language. If any are sick, she inquires into their cases, and, if necessary, sends them to the hospital, with a letter to the medical officer in charge, requesting him to prescribe. Finding that many of her flock suffer from wracking coughs, she procures from the hospital a big bottle of ordinary cough mixture, with which she doses those whose throats are most affected, and she furthermore obtains from the same source a supply of fever and other pills—all for her poor. These measures sharpen the wits of some one among them

of more than ordinary acumen, one who has served Europeans in a domestic capacity. "If," says he to himself, "the lady will give us free medicines for one kind of complaint, she will do so for another. Accordingly, a day or two later, this man turns up at the Mission lady's muster with his head swathed, and carrying a small bottle—fastened with a dirty bit of twine round the neck, and a wooden plug in lieu of a cork. After making a salaam (obeisance) to the lady, he explains that he is suffering from an excruciating earache, so would the *Dorasani* kindly give him a little suitable medicine, for which he has brought a bottle? The credulous, unsuspecting lady falls into the trap; she knows that a plug of cotton wool soaked in brandy is a good remedy, and as she has no laudanum, she fills the bottle with brandy, and handing the sufferer some cotton wool, instructs him how to apply the two in combination. Ninety-nine per cent. of the lower-class natives of both sexes adore brandy; so, with this successful example or "lead" before them, it is not very long ere all the lady's pensioners become afflicted with earache, and the good woman's eyes are not opened to the roguery being practised till the missionary expresses surprise at her expenditure of brandy, and she tells him the reason, that his Reverence explains matters, whereupon the supply of the spirit is summarily stopped, and with it the earache epidemic becomes a thing of the past.

CHAPTER XI

IMPOSTORS

LIKE the Mendicant—treated of in the preceding chapter—the Impostor uses India as his arena for aiming at the pockets and practising on the credulity of our people out there. He enjoys the same liberty as the Beggar; more, as he is not so numerous and ostentatious, and the police, though well knowing him to be what he is, do not hustle or interfere with the man—a privilege, you may be sure, he takes full advantage of. Unlike the Beggar, however, who is indigenous to the soil, the Impostor may be regarded as cosmopolite. As a rule, he is a native of India, but he may also hail from other parts—a waif or stray from anywhere else on the face of the earth.

To commence with the "foreigners." A man will suddenly make his appearance at the station where you are living, and assiduously go round from bungalow to bungalow—in the European quarter, that is. He is old, swarthy, grey-headed, bearded, spectacled; wears a fez, and is dressed not at all in accordance with the requirements of the torrid Indian climate, for he is attired in a stuffy, thick, black frock-coat of curious cut, buttoned to the chin; seedy

striped tweed trousers, and marvellous-looking boots, sizes too big, the uppers of a check pattern, adorned with white buttons, the toes turned up, and pointing in opposite directions. The most salient characteristic of this individual, which forcibly presents itself to you through your olfactory nerves, is his evident unacquaintance with a certain article called soap; for, like Job's war-horse, you are able to scent him from afar, and no sooner you open the interview in porch or verandah, you commence manœuvring so as to keep to windward of the visitor. The dog does not approve of him, and growlingly sniffs round those shabby continuations: you call off the terrier and ask the man his business. He gives you a semi-oriental salute, half-bow, half-salaam, touching the tasselled fez in the process, and blandly inquires in French if you can speak that language, or Turkish, or Arabic. You answer in the negative, whereupon he falls back on broken English, and producing a formidable-looking, very dirty document, printed in Persian character and endorsed with many *visé*-stamps, informs you that it is his passport. As you are unable to decipher that passport, you wave it away, and again ask the holder his business. He then proceeds to tell you that he is a native of a village near Varna, in Bulgaria, that he suffered during the Bulgarian Atrocities, his house being burnt down and his family massacred, that, managing to escape death, he was forced to immediately flee his country and take refuge in Egypt, where he had been ever since. Casting your mind

back, you recollect that the Bulgarian Atrocities were committed somewhere in the middle seventies—and many years have passed since. You ask how long he has been exiled in Egypt; he says ten years: you note the discrepancy and become suspicious, but, curious to ascertain to what length he will go to impose on your credulity, you tell him to continue his narrative. After giving a harrowing résumé to those particular events that resulted in his compulsory self-expatriation, he says that by faith he is a Mahomedan, by trade a carpenter, and that as such he had been earning an honest living in Cairo till his eyesight failed. You want to know how it is he has come to India?—how gravitated some hundreds of miles up-country, and with what object? He explains that by the time he had to abandon work, owing to his eyes, he had put by a little money, and that, being further incapacitated from plying his trade, he decided to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and visit the tomb of the Prophet before he died. Travelling overland to Suez, he sailed thence in a pilgrim ship for Jeddah—the port for Mecca; but the vessel was caught by a storm in the Red Sea, and went down with every soul on her, except himself, for he had managed to cling to a lifebuoy, and the next day was picked up by a British steamer, bound for Bombay, where he landed a month ago, destitute and penniless. The Turkish Consul would have nothing to do with him: Bulgaria was not individually represented, and he found none of his countrymen in Bombay whom he could apply

to for aid; so, being aware of the furor of indignation which had been created among the British by the Bulgarian Atrocities, he resolved to appeal to their sympathies as a sufferer from the cruelty practised by the Turks on that occasion: therefore, after exhausting Bombay, he started on the tramp into the interior, and here he was at your door, begging for your bounty. You do not believe his story one bit, circumstantially as it has been given, so you abruptly tell the fellow to go, and are glad to get rid of him.

Now, a day or two afterwards, your premises are invaded by a female—big, blowzy, of a fair complexion, and not without some pretensions to good looks, but of the *passé*, faded order. The woman is somewhat gaudily attired, in a half-oriental, half-European style: she speaks tolerable though broken English, and tells you she is a Jewess, from Jerusalem, engaged on a holy mission. Here she takes from her reticule a fat pocket-book, opens and hands it to you, with the remark that it contains her subscription list: the pages are crowded with undecipherable names in all sorts of calligraphy, and amounts in different kinds of money against them. You take the book, and turn to the last entries, to ascertain whether other folks in the station have given anything: you find none, and remark on the fact to the woman. She readily explains that, having just arrived, she has been round only to a few houses—the inmates of which, unfortunately, had either driven her away, or did not approve of her mission.

"What is your mission?" you ask, returning the list.

After informing you that she is one of a thousand women, sent out into the world on the same errand, she gives you back the book, open at the first page, and requests you to read the English portion, for the appeal is written in several languages. You find the English: it is short and legible, and says: "The bearer, Martha Naomi Sassune, is authorised by the Synod of Jerusalem to collect subscriptions for the sacred object of emancipating the Holy City from Turkish rule, which the Ottoman Government will surrender to the Jewish Nation for a certain sum of money."

If you are interested in the freedom of Jerusalem from Mahomedan suzerainty, and you have a partiality for the descendants of those who staged the Tragedy of Calvary, you put your name down as a subscriber, and hand the money to Martha Naomi Sassune; but if not, you restore the book to Martha Naomi Sassune and tell her also to go. The circumstance, however, of the fezzed man with the passport, the victim of the Bulgarian Atrocities, hailing from Cairo, being so closely followed by the Jewess on a holy mission from Jerusalem, sets you pondering, and you remember that some six months previously a boot and shoemaker opened business in the shop street of your station under the somewhat cryptic name of Ihrr Ben Moosa Effendi. He has already established a reputation for good work, far outdoing the local native *moochies* or cobblers,

and giving you value for your money, be it in the shape of a pair of shooting boots, or repairing a bridle. You yourself have tried Moosa Effendi ; you know he speaks English, and from his patronymic, together with his appearance, you judge him to be a Turk of sorts, and you have an idea that probably he will be able to give you some information regarding the Atrocity Man and the Holy Mission Woman. Accordingly, after dinner you stroll down to his shop : it is closed, but the Effendi is lounging in the little verandah, smoking a narghile. He jumps up, fetches a chair from inside, he standing by while you describe your visitors and repeat your conversation with them. Moosa Effendi laughs, mutters something unintelligible under his beard, and then says, "Have nothing to do with them, sir ; they one party. The man and woman have come from Port Said to Bombay, and from Bombay they are prowling up-country stations. She is prostitute, and belongs to him ; he takes her money."

This is astonishing, after what they severally told you. "But what about their stories ?" you ask.

"All lies, sir : I can tell very well. Some one saying to them that perhaps I am country man, so they came to me, and talked same nonsense, and when I abused them for lying, and threatened to call police, they confessed real cause of coming here."

"And what is the real cause ?"

"The woman not too (very) pretty and too young now, sir : she not getting much money

in Port Said; so they come to Bombay: there they find many European prostitutes, and no chance for them, so they travelling from this place to that place."

"What on earth for—if their stories are untrue?"

"That any English gentleman may see woman and engage for concubine: if not, they will set up brothel in bazaar somewhere. Man first tried to get money, then woman, with lying stories. He not Moslem; he Jew fellow."

You leave Moosa Effendi and walk home—a sadder and wiser man: sadder—to think that the world should harbour such impostors; wiser—in that you have learnt another instance of the depravity of human nature.

With the development of steamer lines and railways, the Chinaman is not such a rarity in the Indian hinterland as he used to be; although from John Company's days he has always been found in great numbers in Rangoon, Calcutta, Bombay, and to a less extent in Madras, variously placed in life, from merchant prince down to menial. Nowadays, wherever the railway serves and Western exotics live, the Chinaman is to be met with—chiefly as a vender of what he, in his pidgin-English, styles "Sinee kloliostees," meaning "Chinese curiosities," or "Sinee plissuv ploos," that is, "Chinese preserved fruits." Two of them will come to your bungalow; no doubt about their nationality: the Mongolian features, the hairless, sickly-yellow faces, the long pig-tails wound at the back of the head, the blue baggy trousers, the white

blouses, the straw hats, the outlandish shoes, the bland, child-like address, all proclaim them to be genuine celestials. But you observe that, while decently clothed, they look half-starved, and you feel inclined to order them something to eat before proceeding to inspect their wares. One man extracts from his hand-basket a variety of ornaments carved in soap-stone, which "John" swears he has brought with him all the way from Canton, and that only counterfeits are to be had in India. From his basket, "John" number two brings forth some quaint little jars, miniature facsimiles of the familiar large preserved ginger and chow-chow jars one sees in every grocer's shop here, and occasionally in India. He vows that the contents come straight from Pekin, and are far superior to the imported stuff which is made wholesale in Hong-Kong, not by Chinese, but by foreigners, who are quite ignorant of the art. You remember that there is a dingy little den—kept by a Scindee settler in the corner of the station bazaar where these very soap-stone sculptures are procurable. You also know that one of the Europe-shops sells these very preserves, but in the ordinary large jars: you have driven past these emporia, and noticed the said goods in them. You suspect the Chinamen of trickery, that they are trying to impose on you; so you tell them to go, and on subsequently making inquiries of the police, you learn that all these itinerant venders from the "Flowery land" visiting the station come provided with those little jars, and with sufficient money to lodge as security with the Scindee

curio-dealer and the Europe-shop man, from whom they obtain their stock. The carvings are presented as they are, but the contents of the big ginger and chow-chow jars are emptied into the smaller receptacles, and thus equipped—with their own indubitable Chinese *tout ensemble* to back them, aided by an immensity of lying—they carry on the imposition without faltering.

A respectably dressed native comes along, and after announcing himself by some such name as Swamy Kunnoo, or God's Eye, will say in the vernacular that he is a heathen pariah, and that in a dream he has recently had a call from the God of the Christians to forsake idolatry and turn to Him.

"Well, do you intend obeying the call?" you ask.

"Yes, sir; but before getting baptized, with my family, I should like to show your God—by doing some good work—that I am worthy of being received into His fold."

"You should consult the *padre* (station chaplain) or the missionaries on the subject."

"I shall have to go to them for my baptism, sir; but in the meanwhile I wish to act independently."

"I see. What good work do you propose taking up?"

"Well, sir, the *parcherry* (slum, inhabited by pariahs) where I live is sunk into a shocking state of immorality: the amount of intoxication that goes on at night—when the men come home from work—is fearful. I should like to hold

a meeting every evening, and warn my countrymen to abstain from intemperance."

"Are you going to do so?"

"I am not able to—yet, sir, because there is no proper place to conduct the meeting in. A suitable building of bamboo and *cadjans* (dried platted cocoanut leaves), capable of holding even fifty people, will cost twenty rupees. A few of the better-class, more temperate pariahs have promised to subscribe a lump sum of five rupees towards the cost, which is all I can get from them, and as I have no money, I am making bold to approach the English residents of the station to help me in such a good cause."

These sort of people have either bitten or tried to bite you so often that by now you are rather shy of them. You resolve, therefore, to make inquiries before contributing towards the furtherance of the "good cause"; so you inform the would-be temperance promoter that you will think over it, and tell him to call again the following day, whereat his dissatisfied, disappointed look as he turns away seems to justify your suspicions. That evening, starting a little early for tennis or whatever may be going on, you drive to the police station near the *parcherry*, take up a constable on the back seat of your dogcart, and entering the slum, you inquire for the man named Swamy Kunnoo: no one knows anything about such an individual! Has not any one then been canvassing subscriptions for erecting a temperance lecture hall in their quarter? No; this is the first they have heard of it. You drive back to the police

station, and calling for the serjeant in charge, you describe Swamy Kunnoo, repeat the substance of your interview with that pretentious reformer, and direct the serjeant to try and find out something about him. The policeman comes a day or so later and reports that Swamy Kunnoo's real name is Moonien, living up by the cavalry lines, a cook by calling, but a drunken rascal and notorious bad character, who has only recently been let out from jail, where he had been imprisoned for theft!

Another notable and common Impostor is the wandering Fortune-teller, generally from the Punjaub or Kashmeer. He does most of the talking in English, strictly confining himself to a string of set phrases he has by rote, all on the subject of his business; but change the topic, and his fluency immediately collapses. To the sceptic it is perfectly marvellous the number of English people in India who believe in this charlatan's ability to read futurity, as will be proved by glancing at the book he exhibits, containing many really genuine testimonials—some from well-known folks, certifying to the reliability of the bearer's prognostications. Here is something like a typical one :—

"UMBALLA, 5*th June* 1904.

"Ganda Singh,

"Door No. 10, Maywa Bazaar, Lahore.

"When you told my fortune at Allyghur last year I asked for an address that would find you, and promised to write and let you know if your foretellings about me turned out to be true. In two instances they have. I now am blessed with

a fine baby boy, and my uncle has just died in Australia—leaving me a good deal of money, though not the huge amount you named. You are at liberty to make use of this, and show it to any one you like. GRACE B."

The cunning Ganda Singh, before promising these blessings to Mrs. B.——, in return for the stipulated fee of five rupees, had taken care to ascertain that she had just been married: Captain B——, at the Fortune-teller's request, had been present at the séance: the "prophet" observed them to be a fine healthy couple, and that consequently he was fairly safe in predicting the domestic event alluded to. Then, by means of his course of catechetical questions, insinuatingly put, he must have wormed it out of the lady that her Australian uncle—who may have been a successful sheep farmer out there—was a childless widower, that she was his only surviving relative, and a great pet of his, that he frequently sent her substantial cheques, and though the uncle had not actually said it, she had every reason to believe that he would leave her his money. Nothing easier: Ganda Singh, after pretending to consult a book of hieroglyphics, deduced her horoscope therefrom, and prophesied, not only the coming of the baby, but a cool hundred thousand pounds from the Antipodal uncle!

CHAPTER XII

RUNNING AMUCK

RUNNING Amuck is a more or less dangerous frenzy, induced by a vitiated, supersensitive state of the mind. It is peculiar to the East, particularly to the farther East, where, among such emotional people as the natives of the Malay Archipelago, the affection is of common occurrence. The word "Amuck" is derived from the Malaysian *Amok*, to kill, and the dictionaries describe the phrase "to run Amuck" as "to rush madly about, and attack all comers, as is done by fanatics in the East." The principal causes for this calamitous distemper may be attributed to religious hallucination, jealousy, or a yearning for revenge, and temporary insanity brought on by over-indulgence in intoxicants, opium, or other drugs of an inflammatory nature. The *Ghazis* or "fighters for the Islamic Faith," who gave us such trouble during our successive wars with Afghanistan, afford a notable type of Amuck-Runners. Fanatics of the most pronounced character, knowing no fear, and literally seething with religious fervour, these zealots generally led the van in the many murderous tussles we had in all three Afghan campaigns of 1842, 1879, and 1881. Charging

our troops with the most frenzied *élan*, in spite of numbers being shot down, the survivors who did get within striking distance would throw themselves on our bayonets, cut at our men with their keen *tulwars* (swords), and although even when impaled—with the life-blood pouring from them—they would slash and hew so long as breath remained. They were distinguished by their white clothing, assumed as an emblem of purity and sanctity—the ordinary Afghan being mostly clad in colours; and when, preparatory to an engagement, a shimmering cloud of *Ghazis* could be seen advancing to the attack, there was a tightening of belts and a setting of teeth in our ranks, for every man there knew that those white-robed figures would die rather than yield or retreat. A similar spirit manifested itself in the armies of the Mikado during the Russo-Japanese war: pure fanaticism had much to do towards inciting the little Japs to deeds of desperate reckless valour in their struggle with the formidable Reuski—the bugbear of Creation up to that time. Of course, patriotism and love of country supplemented the fanatical element: anyhow, whatever the motive may have been, it produced a class of fighters who for dauntless, headlong valour have never been equalled — except by the *Ghazis* aforesaid. Shortly after the fall of Port Arthur, a writer with experience in such matters, and with an eye on future potentialities, asked the press in vain to print a brochure of his—advocating the enrolment into our Indian native army of as many *Ghazis* as good pay and grant of lands

on our side of the border could tempt to come across and settle down under our flag. The writer proposed that these fanatics should be formed into separate battalions, not be subjected to too rigid discipline, be armed with the English service rifle and their own native *tulwars*, and by kind, just treatment they be so won over to a love of the British *Raj* or Government that they would be prepared to display the same heroism on its behalf as we knew by dire experience they had so conspicuously shown when fighting against us.

In India, during ordinary times, when an Amuck-Runner comes out on the war-path, he is generally under the influence of religious mania : a long course of ascetism and austerity culminates in a rooted desire to achieve something great on behalf of the Cause ; and how better to do so than by immolating a few of the heretics around him ? and all are heretics who are not of his faith—whatever it may be. Brooding over this idea—perhaps for days, he at length makes the resolve : the warped, aberrated state of his intellect prevents him from weighing the after consequences ; for existence is sweet to every one, and it is only in the heat of battle or sudden danger that the sane man holds his life cheaply, and is willing to yield it " for the ashes of his fathers and the temples of his gods." Be that as it may, our lunatic provides himself with a sword or knife—sharpened to razor-like keenness, and selecting an auspicious moment, out he rushes from concealment into the crowded street, either yelling at the top of his voice or

in stern silence, and slashes, hews, or stabs at every heretic whom he encounters in his mad career. The people seeing him cut down his first victim, realise his bent, and fly in terror; some frantically climb trees or huts; others run straight before them, or dive into the first open door. Some man—bolder than the rest—tries to intercept him; but the maniac disables him and continues on, till finally, for want of breath, he drops to the ground, still grasping his reeking weapon. By now the news has been conveyed to the police station; a *posse* of native constables, armed with loaded muskets, comes along at the double; the N.C.O. in command summons the Runner to surrender: the ruffian, seeing the game up, and perhaps thinking that it is not altogether worth the candle, throws down his sword or knife, and submits. He is manacled, and marched off to the lock-up; a tale is made of the damage he has wrought—so many killed, so many more or less wounded: he is eventually haled before the Session Judge, who sentences him to death, transportation, or term of penal servitude, according to the gravity of his offences.

Running Amuck from jealousy or a yearning for revenge more frequently happens in our native army—disappointment in promotion generally being the incentive. A man who may have been expecting his step is passed over: he thinks he is the victim of injustice; he frets over it; he dwells on it till he loses his reason, and resolves to take the life of his supplanter as well as that of any one—such, for instance, as his native officer—whom he believes to have

been instrumental in his supersession. The aggrieved one contrives to secrete some ball-ammunition, and then, with his service rifle, he awaits a favourable opportunity, sallies out on to the parade-ground, and shoots down the man "who has taken the bread out of his mouth," following up with firing at whoever he suspects to have had a finger in causing him misfortune. If one or both shots prove fatal, the murderer as a rule stands his ground and surrenders, remarking that his jealousy has been appeased and his revenge wreaked. If, however, he has not been so successful, he rapidly reloads, breaks into a run, and fires indiscriminately at those who attempt to arrest him, wounding or killing more, according to the number of cartridges he has left. Sometimes, if a responsible officer—European or native—is by, he either opens fire on the miscreant with his revolver, or orders any guard or other armed men with ammunition on them to do so. If the murderer runs the gauntlet, he takes refuge in some hut or other building that may be handy, and in blatant language, accompanied with the most vile abuse, dares any and all to come in and seize him. A rush is made; the skulker fires, hits one of the assailants, then, with his last cartridge he blows out his own brains or discharges it into the thick of the attackers, and with bayonet fixed, his back against the wall, fights the whole field till he is overpowered by numbers, manacled, walked off to a cell, and after due trial expiates his crime on the gallows.

He who runs amuck under the influence of

drink or drug cannot be considered responsible for his actions ; but the law makes no allowance : if he kills a man, he is hanged ; if he wounds a man he is probably transported for life or for a long term of years. An instance of the evil effect of opium-taking has already been given in Chapter I. of this work. Some years subsequent to that occurrence a rather similar incident happened in a native corps stationed in a suburb of Madras, when a sepoy shot to death the regimental adjutant as he galloped past to the parade-ground ; immediately after which the murderer started running amuck, but firing so wildly that he injured no one else, and was soon captured. To account for his dastardly act, the man stated at the inquiry that the adjutant had not recommended him for promotion ; that he — the adjutant — had biased the company officer, and that as there was no use serving colours under which promotion was unobtainable, and favouritism flourished, he had determined to kill the adjutant and then die—presumably by *felo de se.* He had had time to commit suicide before being captured, and when asked why he had not done so, the villain calmly and collectedly replied that taking one's own life was a cowardly act : he was no coward, pointing to the medal-ribbons on his breast, so he wished to die on the gallows, whereby all right-thinking men would regard him as a martyr, as a victim to injustice and oppression.

A curious case happened in a native regiment garrisoning Singapore. It was a smart corps, commanded by a smart and favourite officer, who

had served in it for many years, having been appointed to the regiment on his first coming out to India, and never during his long connection with it had there been the least sign of disaffection or discontent among the men, who all loved the Colonel, and regarded them as their *Mâ-Bâp* (mother and father). They had been at Singapore only a few months when it was discovered that some of the sepoys had acquired the habit of opium-smoking, picked up—no doubt—from the Malays and Chinese resident in the place. Recognising the practice as pernicious to health, discipline, and efficiency, the Commanding Officer set himself to put a stop to it, and in this he found willing coadjutors in the Mahomedan *Soubadar*-Major (chief Captain, native rank), the Hindoo *Havildar*-Major (Sergeant-Major, native rank), and the Roman Catholic convert *Tundboor*-Major (Drum-Major, native rank)—the trio representative of the three principal racial components of which the battalion was formed. After caution and persuasion had failed, more stringent measures were adopted; but it proved a matter of great difficulty to bring home the actual offence to any particular individual. Men would be found—both on and off duty—in a half-dazed, stupefied condition, and when taxed with opium-smoking they solemnly denied the accusation, attributing their obfuscated state to over-indulgence in arrack, or that they were in bad health; some even volunteering to go into hospital. The question was—how the sepoys obtained the drug, for a strong picket of day-and-night

military police had been told off to the bazaars with instructions to keep a vigilant eye on the opium-den quarters, and arrest any member of the regiment who went there: in addition to which—at the instance of the Colonel—the civil authorities had strictly forbidden the proprietors of these hells from selling opium to the military. But still the mischief continued. The picket was strengthened, the civil police associated with it, other restrictions enforced; and in spite of the three native officers assuming disguises and perambulating the opium-den streets after dark, not a culprit could be caught. The evil increased to such an extent that at last, calling for a general parade, the Colonel warned the battalion that unless the opium-taking ceased, he would be under the painful necessity of placing all the bazaars out of bounds for the regiment—a measure by which the innocent would have to suffer with the guilty. The threat had no effect, so an order of the day prohibited the men from setting foot in the bazaars under pain of arrest and confinement, while certain picked individuals from each company would be told off to do the marketing for the rest. The morning after the promulgation of this order, the gate-posts of the European officers' bungalows, the trees shading the place-of-arms, the band rotunda, the walls of solitary cells, and the mess-house were found placarded with the following, written in Hindustani, Tamil, and Telugu—the three leading vernaculars of the Madras Army:—

"There are four very powerful men in the regiment; they are the Colonel commanding,

the *Soubadar*-Major, the *Havildar*-Major, and the *Tundboor*-Major. But there are four things in the regiment more powerful than they, namely, the musket, the bayonet, the powder, and the ball. If the four powerful men continue to spy on us and persecute us by confinement to the lines, we shall employ the four things more powerful than they to compel them to give us back our liberty. There are fifty resolute men prepared to break out when you least expect it, who will shoot down the four powerful men and any one else who interferes with us. Take warning ! "

In native calligraphy there is no distinctive characteristic as in ours, that is, there is no field for a handwriting expert who could bring home to a particular person the authorship of a manuscript, so no test of this kind could aid the Colonel and his native officers. Fortunately, by dint of holding out bribes, the *Havildar*-Major happened on an informer who, on being given ten rupees, stated that a large number of sepoys had become such slaves to opium, and felt the deprivation so keenly, that they had bound themselves together under an oath to break out and run amuck unless the restrictions were forthwith removed, when they would shoot the Colonel and the three native officers who had been so active against them ; that by some means they had procured ammunition, and that the outbreak might be looked for at any moment. At this the *Soubadar*-Major, on his own initiative, bribed the traitor with an additional twenty rupees, promising him fifty more if he would point out the instigators or ringleaders of the

plot. Tempted by the prospect of earning so large a sum, the informer agreed, and amply guarded, he went round late at night, and denounced every one implicated in the scheme. These were promptly arrested, court-martialled, dismissed the service, sentenced to imprisonment, and sent across to India by steamer, there to serve their terms. Thus was the nucleus of what might have proved a serious *émeute* crushed in the bud.

N——, a well-to-do Assam tea-planter, unable to put up any longer with the shortcomings of his local domestics, thought that a thoroughly good *khansamah* or butler on high wages from down-country would relieve him of his worries; so he wrote to a friend in Agra, North-West Provinces, to send a man who would be capable of taking the entire household management in his own hands; and to such a person the planter said he would gladly pay fifty rupees a month. Fifty rupees was an unusually high figure: the ordinary rate for a *khansamah* or head servant ranging from fifteen to twenty-five rupees per mensem. The friend soon found a suitable man, and forthwith dispatched him on his long journey to N——'s estate—situated many miles up the great Brahmapootra River. The *khansamah* duly arrived. N—— was highly pleased with his appearance and with his credentials, all of which spoke most eulogistically of the holder. Ameer Bux—the new man—speedily proved his worth; he relieved N—— of all household affairs, reduced the hitherto disorderly servants to discipline, taught the cook

to better the menu, gave the whole bungalow a regular spring cleaning, and put forward respectful suggestions to his master for ameliorating the gardens, the fowl-run, the cattle-shed, and the stables, all of which were in a sad state of neglect, for the reason that N—— never could spare time from the tea-planting work to attend to these matters, and hitherto had no one to whom he could depute them. Within the month, so satisfied was he with Ameer Bux, that N—— not only added another ten rupees to the fellow's salary, but shifted him from his poky outhouse godown to a small detached corrugated-iron bungalow, and having ascertained that the man could keep accounts in Hindee, and, further, had found him perfectly honest in several monetary transactions, he entrusted the *khansamah* with all the household expenditure—including the paying of the domestic establishment. Indeed, N—— would have given him charge of the estate coolie muster-roll, and wages-sheet, but for fear of offending the overseers. Anyhow, Ameer Bux's lines had fallen in pleasant places. What with his sixty rupees' monthly salary, his command of the house expenses, the servants' salaries, and other opportunities for "pickings," he had ample means of feathering his nest—had he been so inclined. N—— placed implicit confidence in the man: he periodically made over sums of money to him, of which Ameer Bux would render accurate account, for he was one of the exceptions—honest as the day. Well, time fled: N—— heaped favours on the *khansamah*, and

fully believed him to be content with his berth. Learning that Ameer Bux could shoot, N—— presented him with a double-barrel breech-loader, with which at odd times the butler would sally forth and bring in partridge, jungle-fowl, or some other game that made an appreciable addition to the larder. The planter also gave him a silver watch, and set apart one of the estate ponies for the man's use whenever he had business in the neighbouring civil station—eight miles distant. Then this happy state of affairs was suddenly broken up: Ameer Bux became a victim to nostalgia—a disease to which the natives of India are very subject, especially when far removed from their country. Sepoys on foreign service are peculiarly liable; *ayahs* and other servants accompanying their employers to Europe, after the first novelty has worn off, succumb, and are seized with a longing for home: under the nostalgic influence they become melancholy, morbid, and occasionally dangerous. Surrounded as he was with every comfort, drawing a handsome salary which enabled him to "put by" fifty rupees or so in the station post office savings bank when he rode there after every monthly pay-day, his duties congenial, more those of a master than servant, it came as a startling surprise to N—— when he noticed an ominous change in his trusted *khansamah*.

"What is the matter with you, Ameer Bux?" asked the planter kindly, finding the man seated in his little verandah, gazing dazedly into space.

"My lord," he replied, respectfully rising to

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his feet, but speaking in a strangely unnatural tone, "I am desirous of returning to Agra."

"Why?"

"Love of home and children is as strong within our breasts as in those of the *gora-logue* (white people), sir. I have been away now for nearly a year, and the longing to be with my family again troubles me greatly."

"But you receive frequent letters from your home, and you have always told me that your family is well."

"True, sir; nevertheless, I want to go."

"Oh, that is all nonsense, Ameer Bux! I cannot, will not spare you. What with the busy tea season just commenced, and the *Mem-Sahib* (mistress, Mrs. N——) coming out in a few weeks, how should I manage without you? Now, my orders are these: just you stay quiet; later on, when matters are more settled, I will give you a month's leave—to visit your home, paying your expenses both ways. There! do not let me hear any more about your wanting to desert me."

Even this kindly arguing, coupled with the tempting offer *re* the travelling expenses, was of no effect, for the demon had entered into the soul of Ameer Bux. That evening, when the workpeople returned, and were flocking into their lines, Ameer Bux—whose nostalgia had developed into insanity—rushed out and commenced firing into the crowd, hitting two men. A panic ensued; the coolies fled helter-skelter—with the *khansamah* in pursuit, jamming fresh cartridges into his breech-block as he ran. The

first reports and the hubbub reaching N——'s ears, he hastened to the scene of the commotion and intercepted the maniac. Ameer Bux stopped, eluded his master's grasp, and before the latter could interfere, the wretched lunatic dropped the butt of his gun to the ground, with a swift movement bent his head over the muzzle, and pressing the trigger with his naked toe—fell dead at the planter's feet !

CHAPTER XIII

FANATICISM—DISLOYALTY—SUPERSTITION

In India, religion—or, rather, the pretence thereof—especially if of a fanatical character, is generally the guise under which disaffected natives manifest their disloyalty towards the British Government, and their hatred for the white Christian from the West. It was proved beyond dispute that though the wire-pullers kept carefully in the background, the great upheaval of 1857 was engineered and fomented by fanatical preachers, to whose baneful influence may also be attributed the notorious Wahabi conspiracy, other minor commotions that have occurred from time to time, and the smouldering hostility for us at the present day. The Mahomedan *Fakirs* and *Durvaishes*, the Hindoo *Gurus*, *Sunyassees*, *Jogis*, *Yogis*, and *Bawajees* are primarily responsible for the promulgation of sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion against our authority. As a class they are inimical; they detest our faith, and while the Moslem loathes us for being pig and turkey-eaters, the Hindoo regards our feeding on the flesh of kine with equal horror. For all that, there is not much love lost between the two sects in this connection, for while the swine is not interdicted

to the Hindoo—the lower classes particularly —the Mahomedan is as great a beef-eater as we are, and the two persuasions frequently come to loggerheads on this very question. But let the Christian be the object of their mutual animosity, then they will bury their own differences, and make common cause against us as they did in 1857, and as they are prepared to do again now. Some of these fanatics are civil spoken to the European, and veil their rancour under sycophantic language; but the majority take no pains to conceal their hatred; they do not trouble themselves to make you a salaam, and should you address them, their replies are the reverse of respectful, not to say courteous. Representatives of these undesirable people are to be found at every *Mosque, Musjid,* or *Eedgah* —Moslem places of worship; at every *Deyvul* or *Goody*—the temples or shrines of the Hindoos, as supplements to the ecclesiastics proper, *i.e. Moollahs* and *Padres* of the one, the *Brahmins, Poojaris,* and *Pundarums* of the other. Whatever be their sect, these fanatics are "gentlemen at large": they acknowledge no earthly master, they receive no salary or other emolument; but, notwithstanding, they may be said to live on the fat of the land, being supported by the voluntary offerings of a credulous clientele, who regard them as holy, and under the special protection of the deity to whom they owe allegiance. In addition to hanging about places of worship, the Mahomedan *Fakir* may be found at some wayside spot, under a shady tree, established in what is called a *tuckea*,

meaning a pillow, or a *mâkan*, signifying resting-place. There is a small hut, and before it a mud-built *chaboutra* or raised platform, on which the holy man reclines and converses with any one who may choose to come and sit with him. Similarly the Hindoo *Sunyassee* isolates himself, presiding over a tiny *Goody* or shrine with a vermilion-besmeared idol seated inside —the man occupying a small hovel adjoining. Every passing traveller—unless of some other persuasion—turns off to *Tuckea* or *Goody*, pays his respects to *Allah* or *Swamy*, and presents the recluse with a dole either of money or grain. Those pietists living within the pale of some sanctuary conduct themselves more meekly than the isolated hermit or recluse. The former take on themselves more the rôle of religious mendicant—an object to be pitied as much as revered; but the latter, on assuming a "pitch" for themselves, become more assertive, more pretentious: they will not hesitate in reviling the passers-by who are not of their faith, and, ay, the more virulently disposed will mutter curses, not loud but deep, should the *Nazarani* or Nazarene—as they contemptuously style us —happen to pass that way.

For example, take the town of Conjeveram, or, properly, Kanchevurrum, in the Chingleput district of the Madras Presidency. There are no Mahomedan recluses here, it being a purely Dravidian centre, and therefore teems with Hindoo fanatics of all classes. Conjeveram is famous throughout India for its pagodas and temples, taking rank in point of sanctity with

those of Benares, Hurdwar, Juggernaut, Tiruputhy, and Ramaisweram. It is visited by Hindoo devotees and pilgrims from all parts of the country, the latter being mainly composed of *Byragees* from North India, who carrying Ganges water for libation on the gods at Ramaisweram—to the extreme south—take Conjeveram *en route*, and perhaps pour a drop or two of the sacred fluid on the local idols. Periodical festivals are held here, to which many thousands of both sexes flock to fulfil sundry vows undertaken from various causes. They come decked out in their best, laden with offerings and gifts—each according to his or her circumstance, ostensibly for the propitiation of the deities, but, as a matter of fact, the major portion go to the officiating priests first, and the fanatics second—enabling them to feather their nests not only with hard cash, but jewellery and clothing of every description. How the votaries are simple enough to part so readily with their property it is difficult to say; but, when the innate craftiness of the priests and the fanatics is considered, it may be taken for granted that a large amount of "bamboozling" is brought to bear on the more unsophisticated masses, and that the said priests and fanatics, through sheer cunning, secure the bulk of the offerings for themselves. Both officials and hangers-on make a good thing out of it, otherwise they would not devote themselves so assiduously to the lucrative task of imposing on the blind belief of the worshippers as they do; for, like others, the native will not prosecute any undertaking

that does not pay. These priests and fanatics take advantage of those who put their trust in them, after the fashion of certain unscrupulous individuals amongst ourselves running houses of agency, who make rapid fortunes, and retire from business—to give room to others to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors with equal success. The priests and fanatics act on the same principle; they gull the ignorant public, collect all they can, and eventually vacate their places, to be filled by others of the same kidney, who, in their turn, soon amass riches sufficient to keep them in comfort for the rest of their lives. The country is overrun with these men, and it is surprising that they are permitted to remain at large, and continue on their criminal career with impunity.

Most of these more celebrated temples are infested with monkeys—an animal held in veneration by Hindoos as the incarnation of the great deity Hunnooman, or the Monkey God; and the circumstance of any of these creatures being wantonly injured or ill-treated is sure to be resented by the natives who worship them. Some years ago, in a district where the railway had not yet penetrated, a party of inexperienced griffins—young English officers travelling from Madras to join their regiments up-country—outspanned during the heat of the day for tiffin or luncheon near a temple which had a tribe of monkeys inhabiting the nooks and crannies of the elaborately sculptured *gopuram* or tower. The animals—attracted by the smell of food—approached the officers' camp,

whereupon one of the young fellows heedlessly fired, and killed a simian. The Britons were speedily surrounded by a howling mob, led by a number of the temple fanatics, who incited their followers to smite and kill the insolent sacrilegious aliens; and had it not been for the opportune arrival of a detachment of British infantry—time-expired men *en route* for the coast—mischief would have been done—even to bloodshed. As it was, the soldiers had the utmost difficulty in rescuing the young officers, and equal trouble in persuading the incensed crowd to accept ten rupees as compensation.

These fanatics—both Hindoo and Mahomedan—will not hesitate to taunt the Englishman on the hollowness of his supposed moral pre-eminence. In old days, when Europe—leave alone England—was practically a *terra incognita* to the natives of India, they were inclined to look on us as being moulded from superior clay—all heretics though we were; and the white missionary, however arduous he found it to gain over one proselyte, was listened to with a certain amount of respectful attention, for his hearers believed that the inculcations that fell from the good man's lips were observed by us in our own country. One of the audience—more sceptical and outspoken than the others, would perhaps start an argument with the clergyman as to the infallibility of his teachings, but always with deference and courtesy, and although the unbeliever might not be convinced of his error, he and the missionary would part on friendly terms, for there

was no intolerance on either side. Nowadays, in spite of the march of civilisation, the facilities for intercourse with Europe, the evanescence of caste prejudice, and the spread of education, the native openly derides the Christian, and the Cross makes less headway in its contest with the Crescent and Trimurti than of yore. Why? Because these people go in shoals to England now; they see the moral nakedness of the land, and take very good care to report accordingly when they return. The stay-at-homes who hear these accounts from their travelled brethren are strengthened in their unfavourable opinion by marking our own demeanour amongst them out in India. Their freer mingling and connection with us now give them a greater insight to the seamy side of our characters, which teaches them to regard the white race as immoral, shameless, and uncharitable: so, with such ideas, backed by the experiences of those who have visited our country, they arrive at the conclusion that our religion can have no truth or sincerity in it, and that their own faith, their own morals, are preferable, having for their basis the very virtues which we preach but do not practise, whereas they, ignorant and sitting in the shadow of darkness as they are, observe them as far as the dictates of their consciences and the tenets of their respective persuasions will admit.

It is said that the Indian convert is bad; that, after compassing sea and land to make him a proselyte, we also make him twofold more the child of hell than ourselves. There

is a deal of truth in this, as those familiar with the country—especially the Southern Presidency —will acknowledge. The question is, how so many of our native Christians are bad, unless through example set them by their masters? There is no doubt that such is the case, and the sooner a reform comes, the better for both rulers and ruled: then immorality, vice, and crime will decrease, and the native will turn his eyes to the Cross with greater earnestness, admit the blamelessness of our lives, the superiority of our religion over Islamism and heathenism, and, relinquishing the worship of their forefathers, they will adore the only true God, and believe in the promise of after salvation. By precept *and* example it rests with us to lead them to this.

In addition to a mere parade of asceticism and austerity of life, the religious fanatic employs various methods of "crucifying the flesh," as a support to his sanctity. One will make a vow to pass the remainder of his days with an arm held above the head; and apparently he keeps this vow, for people have often gone to the trouble of secretly watching him, and never, to the writer's knowledge, has he been caught with the arm in any other more comfortable or more natural position. Another will dedicate his hair to heaven, and not allow razor, scissors, or comb to be used on it. The consequences are that the hair of both head and face sometimes grows to such length that the former can be twisted into a high coronal, and the latter—divided into two portions—taken behind the

ears and tied in a knot at the back of the neck. The hair of the head never being washed, combed, or otherwise dressed, becomes caked with accumulated filth, and if while the holy man, adorned with such a chevelure, is seated, basking in the sun's rays, you choose to approach near enough to him, you will be able to notice the swarms of vermin disporting themselves in his hair. The beard, too, never unravelled and never scrubbed, presents an equally sickening sight.

With regard to hair in connection with superstitious credulity, a telegraph officer relates that on his transfer from Central India to Scinde, while he rode along making his first inspection of the line between Jacobabad and Rajunpore, he came on a *Fakir* installed on his *tuckea* under a large tree, the branches of which were thickly decorated with long tresses of hair, evidently those of females. Astonished at the sight, the Englishman drew rein and asked the *Fakir* for information on the subject. "Sir," replied the ascetic, speaking civilly enough, "the tresses you see hanging on the branches are the votive offerings of barren women who are desirous of causing the reproach of sterility to be removed from them. This spot is sacred to the name of a noted *Peer* or saint of olden time who lived here, and who with one touch of his little finger cured impotence and unfruitfulness. His spirit still pervades the branches of this tree: I am his servant; I shear the hair of the suppliants, and tie their locks to the branches, and I live on the gifts they bring."

About 9° 25′ N. and 79° 35′ E. lies the sandy little island of Paumben or Pamban, separated from the Indian mainland by a narrow strait called the Paumben Channel, and virtually forming a part of Adam's Bridge. On the channel south bank, facing the mainland, stands Paumben, a sub-civil station, merely a large fishing village, with a few European subordinates of various governmental departments stationed there. At the southern extremity of the island, overlooking Palk Strait, is Ramaisweram, a considerable native town, famous throughout heathendom for the sacredness and importance of its temples. Here are gathered on one spot the shrines dedicated to leading members of the Hindoo Pantheon and mythology, and here flock a perennial stream of devotees from the uttermost parts of the peninsula, many being *Byragees* from the Gangetic Provinces, who carry water from their sacred river all the way to Ramaisweram as propitiatory libations to the gods there located. From Paumben to Ramaisweram there was—and still may be—a sandy track—incongruously paved with large flags of granite, which must have been brought from a great distance, for no such stone could be procured from anywhere in the vicinity, less so on the island itself. Tradition accounts for these stones by relating that in some prehistoric time a certain Rajah or king, beloved of his people, who ruled in North India, was married with much pomp to the daughter of a neighbouring potentate; but, contrary to expectation, there came no issue of the union. Every one

was disappointed, and measures were taken to discover the cause. Celebrated *Hakims* or physicians were called in; they examined the Rajah; they even examined the Ranee or queen, to ascertain whether any physical impediment existed in the procreative organs of man or wife. No, the doctors satisfied themselves that no such obstacles were present. The Rajah became very despondent, till one of his trusted councillors suggested that he should consult a certain prophet or soothsayer who dwelt in a mountain cave called the Cow's Mouth, out of which issued the sacred river Ganges. Accordingly, journeying to Gangoutri in the Punjaub, the nearest town to the cave, the Rajah—bareheaded and barefooted, presented himself at the Cow's Mouth, obtained an audience of the seer, described his quandary, and besought his advice. The holy man, after consulting the oracle, told the Rajah that for sins committed by his ancestors the gods were visiting their crimes upon him, and that the only way of his appeasing the wrath of the deities was to vow to make a pilgrimage to Ramaisweram, not by any conveyance, not even by walking, but by rolling himself along every inch of the way, and not rising to an erect position till he had completed the journey. If he survived the ordeal, though it might last several years, the hermit promised that applicant should be blessed with a male child. The Rajah took the vow, and set out, accompanied by a large retinue, who, suiting themselves to their master's necessarily slow pace, dawdled alongside, cheering him

up and exhorting him to persevere. The rough roads played havoc with his skin, but anticipating this, the party was provided with unguents, and in time the Rajah's epidermis became inured to the unaccustomed abrasive process. The roads, though bad, were hard, and the poor victim to superstition stuck to his task with a resolution worthy of a better cause. When a river was come to, and he had to cross it by boat, the breadth of that river was marked out on the farther bank, and the Rajah rolled himself for an extra distance corresponding therewith. Thus, after two years' rotating, the party crossed over to Paumben Island; but hardly had the Rajah commenced to roll there when he found it impossible to continue, for the yielding sand would not allow of his turning himself over. In vain he asked the islanders if there was no other harder road by which he could proceed on to Ramaisweram—his goal—now so near at hand. No, there was no alternative route. In vain he then begged them to make a road for him; it was only seven miles, and he could wait. He offered a huge sum for the service, but the islanders laughed at him, and asked how were they to build a road with sand alone. At last the Rajah, determined to keep to his vow, and not to be outdone, sent for the headmen of Ramaisweram temples, told them of his mission, of his difficulty, and promised to make a large money offering to their deities, besides paying all expenses, if they—the headmen—would import material from the mainland and construct some sort

of road along which he could proceed, and thus discharge his vow. The men agreed; and for the many months it took them to pave that seven miles of road, the Rajah—faithful to his oath not to stand erect till he reached Ramaisweram—lay prone on the ground, with his retinue camped around him. At length the work was finished, and the Rajah rolled himself on to his destination. That paved road is still pointed out in connection with the tradition, which, however, does not say whether the Rajah reaped the reward of his faith.

At a station where I lived for four years during my last and final sojourn in India, we engaged a bungalow that had not been tenanted for any length of time for the previous twelve years. People—Europeans, of course—came, stayed a short while, and vacated. It was a fine house, in a good but rather retired situation, and standing in ample grounds, heavily timbered with mango trees. The landlord, in despair, went on lowering the rent in the hope of attracting tenants, and by the time we moved into the house its usual monthly rental of ninety-five had dwindled to forty-five rupees per mensem. Circumstances had compelled us to take the step somewhat hurriedly, and it was not until after entering on possession that we heard what militated against our new abode. It appeared that during the last famine a Mahomedan refugee from the low country, while in the throes of cholera, had wandered in at the gates, laid himself down in a corner of the compound, and died. Owing to the famine, the station was in

a disorganised state, and for two days the police had no knowledge of a corpse lying there. When, however, some one did apprise them, and a party came to gather up the dead man, the corpse had disappeared, and although every effort was made to find out what had become of the body, no clue could be obtained; so the natives at once concluded that the Moslem's corpse had been resurrected in the shape of a *Toollookoo dayum* or Mahomedan evil spirit that haunted the spot, with the result that no one could hold the bungalow for long because of the superstitious fears of their servants. We, however, had been joined by some of our old domestics who were with us prior to my retirement from the Service; so we continued to live in that haunted (?) bungalow for four years, because we ourselves had no faith in the supernatural, and we laughed our old followers out of their qualms. Anyhow, towards the end of our stay, we had occasion to change *Chokras* (under servant), and when, after some difficulty, they brought a new boy with excellent credentials and testimonials, he at once began to fight shy of taking service with us on account of the ghostly reputation the house laboured under.

"Look here," I said, after exhausting every argument to induce the fellow to stay, "what is there really to be afraid of? Do you believe in *dayums*?"

"Yes, sar," replied the youth in his jargon English. "I praid (am afraid of) Mommdin (Mahomedan) devil. All pipplis (people) telling got in this house."

"Where does he live?" I inquired banteringly; "in the bungalow or outhouses?"

"No, sar; pipplis telling he ishtap (stops) in mango trees outside," said the boy awedly.

"Well, now, will you try and catch him for me? I will give you fifty rupees if you do; true word."

"*Ab bah*! (Good gracious!)" he gurgled, staring at me; then, evidently fired by the prospect of earning so large a reward, he pulled himself together, and replied resolutely, "Very good, sar; I ishtapping (will stop); but how I can know *dayum*, sar?"

"Very easily: he's a small chap, with head and feet like a goat, a fish's body, and a monkey's tail. What do you say?"

He agreed, and came to work the following day. But there was no getting at the lad: whenever wanted, we had to send some one to fetch him, till at last, one day, I went in search of the truant, to find him perched up a mango tree, armed with a coil of rope, a book, and a bottle.

"Halloa, you, up there!" I shouted. "What are you doing?"

"I looking out por (for) devil, sar," he calmly answered, descending the tree, and standing sheepishly before me. I glanced at the book, a Tamil prayer-book: he was a Roman Catholic convert, so probably he had been reading it.

"What have you got in the bottle—arrack?"

"No, sar; that wholy (holy) water; I getting pram (from) *padre*."

"What on earth for?"

"Make prinkle (To sprinkle) devil, sar. I show prayer-book, therepore (therefore) he get 'praid, and no bite me."

"And the rope?" I asked, seeing it all now.

"To tie up devil and bring to master, and master givee (will give me) pipty (fifty) rupees, sar."

So much for credulous superstition, or superstitious credulity! So much for the power of the almighty dollar!

CHAPTER XIV

SUTTEE — HOOK-SWINGING — HUMAN SACRIFICES —INFANTICIDE—MUTILATION—ABORTION

SUTTEE—sometimes spelt "Satti," the Sanskrit for connubial constancy—is in itself an act of voluntary self-immolation on the part of certain sects of Brahmin and Hindoo women or girls——the latter often of tender age—on the funeral pyres of their husbands, the crowning act of devotion to the shades of the dear departed. The custom, considered criminal, a relic of barbarism according to Western ideas, is supposed to have been totally suppressed throughout British India somewhere about the year 1830, by Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor-General.

In connection with Suttee, the following rather unique legend is still told in India; indeed, it is believed to be included in the Folklore of the country:—

"Long years ago, there lived a learned man of medicine named Purshottum, who practised his profession at a place called Planchi, and had earned a high reputation. Besides his skill in curing the sick who suffered from those ordinary ills which human flesh is heir to, he was known to be clever in the preparation of

certain concoctions for sinister purposes; for by nature the man was avaricious to the core, and would do anything for gain. Some people —farther-seeing, or perhaps superstitious—suspected Purshottum to be a necromancer, as one who dabbled in the Black Art, although they had no real grounds for such an assumption. Anyhow, he and his skill, both as an honest physician and a dealer in potions for questionable use, became household words throughout the length and breadth of the land; and while rajahs, princes, and potentates came to him to be cured, others equally high and wealthy applied to him for poisons wherewith to remove an enemy or wreak a revenge: moreover, great ladies would pay him huge sums for means to procure abortion, for charms, for love-philtres, and such-like aphrodisiac compounds. Purshottum had attained to middle-age without marrying, without even as much as casting an eye on a woman and lusting after her: he gloried in his continence, his purity. But, on the other hand, the time had come when he realised that by the laws of his religion he must beget a son of his own body; so at last he thought seriously of marrying, and employed people to find a suitable girl for him, as he had no leisure to do so himself. But in vain: parents hesitated in surrendering their daughters to such a man, and those who had no such scruples could not furnish a dowry commensurate with the prospective bridegroom's own riches. Then it came to pass that Purshottum was called in to attend the Planchi headman in

an illness that proved fatal; and during the course of his visits he saw the headman's daughter, a beautiful, accomplished girl-widow of sixteen, named Pootli. He at once fell in love with her, but he could not think of making her his wife, because widows are not permitted to marry a second time. Nevertheless, so inflamed were his passions that he resolved to possess the girl at any cost. Finding Pootli insensible to his own advances, he suborned a certain famous — or rather, infamous—old bawd to corrupt her mind with sensual stories, and sing Purshottum's praises in her ear; but again to no purpose. Pootli was pure and virtuous: her boy-husband had died when she was barely seven years of age: she well remembered being led by her mother to the burning-ground, where she saw the pile of wood with her husband's flower-decked corpse laid on it, and she recollected her mother's words telling her that the assemblage of wise men were still deliberating whether she —Pootli—should be required to perform Suttee or not, and that was why the pyre remained unkindled. Naturally, on hearing of the dreadful fate that threatened her, the poor child began to cry, whereupon her inhuman mother soothed her by saying, 'The fire, dear daughter, will not hurt you very much, and does not last long. Your death on the pyre is a sacred duty to the manes of your departed husband, and you must go through it courageously if the assemblage so decide. We will give you opium to deaden your feelings; the smoke will speedily choke you, and the flames soon reduce you to

ashes. Think, dear one, what a glorious death it will be, that saves you from a life of widowed misery,—to be your fate if so be the assemblage rule that you are not to sacrifice yourself; in which case, alas! in return for the life they give you, you will be a reproach to yourself, an encumbrance to your parents; your head will always have to be kept shaved, and everybody will despise you.'

"However, Pootli was not to burn: the assemblage adjudged her too beautiful for the flames. Then, some years later, when her mother first and her father afterwards died, she was left alone in the world, the loveliest virgin in Planchi, but doomed to celibacy and an existence of drudgery, for her parents bequeathed nothing for their child to inherit.

"It was now, while employed as a servant in a brahminical family, that Pootli became subject to Purshottum's persecutions. In vain did his emissary the bawd enlarge on the physician's wealth and position, urging that it would be an honour to her to live with him as his mistress: how many youthful widows had escaped their cruel lot by becoming concubines! But in spite of all the brilliant prospects the old wretch held out, the girl remained obdurate. When the bawd, after repeated futile attempts, told Purshottum that she could do no more, he instructed her to work on the girl's superstitious fears by revealing the fact that he dealt in magic, and unless she yielded willingly he would cast a spell over her that would force her to his arms. The crone again visited Pootli, and earnestly

advised her to surrender herself to Purshottum, as she had just heard that he was in league with the Devil, and that he would gain his end by bewitching her—a threat which the girl laughed to scorn. Pootli's only intimate friend was a woman who had known her parents. This woman had all along persuaded her to accept the physician's protection, but without effect. Meeting in the bazaar, this female 'friend' asked the young widow to obtain leave on the morrow and spend it with her. She agreed, and on reaching her friend's house the next day she was surprised and alarmed to find Purshottum there. Before she could turn to fly, the villain—making a few passes—speedily put poor Pootli to sleep, and promptly accomplished his vile purpose. Then, on regaining consciousness, and realising by the state of her clothes what had befallen her, she gave one horrible maniacal scream, and rushing down to the burning-ground by the riverside, where several corpses were in process of cremation, she threw herself on the nearest blazing pyre, and thus met the very fate she had erstwhile escaped from."

With regard to cremation amongst the natives, the author, shortly after joining the Service, witnessed the following gruesome sight at a *sool ghaut* or Hindoo burning-ground on the banks of the river Godavery. There was only one pyre built, around which a number of mourners of both sexes were occupied in various ways: the corpse lay on the pile of wood; the women lamented and wept; the men moaned and groaned, while several members of the

priestly class circled round the pyre muttering incantations, and invocations to the gods. On ceasing their gyrations one of the priests set a light to the heap of faggots, and the crowd retired, leaving only two almost nude men—armed with long bamboo sticks—standing one on each side of the pyre. As the flames rose, the two watchers, with their eyes intently fixed on the body, uplifted their sticks. Presently, as the conflagration grew fiercer, the men suddenly sprang nearer, and then when the corpse appeared as if about to rise to a sitting posture, the watchers, using their bamboos, beat it back into the now roaring fire! Subsequent inquiry of an old Anglo-Indian medical man elicited the explanation that on the heat reaching certain tendons or muscles, it resulted in contracting them, and thus imparted a convulsive movement to the dead body: further, that the natives believe that the Devil reanimates the corpse in defiance of God's will; but as all good Hindoos consider death preferable to a prolongation of life received from the hands of Satan, the deceased's relatives employ this means to prevent any such an undesirable resurrection.

Hook-swinging is another relic of barbarism that has been vetoed by the British Government: it was finally stamped out shortly before the Indian Mutiny. The swinging is still indulged in occasionally during the celebration of the *Sankarathree* festival; but with this difference—that the swingers now hang suspended from hooks fastened to a waist-belt, not passed

through the muscles of the back or loins as of old, and which frequently ended fatally.

Yet another form of religious or fanatical suicide illegalised by us is courting death under the wheels of idol-cars at festivals; a practice that was once prevalent, especially at that head-centre of Hindooism, Juggernaut or Puree, where devotees, carried away by religious frenzy, would throw themselves in front of the cars as they were being dragged along in procession, and get crushed to a pancake beneath their ponderous wheels.

Child-sacrifices have also been interdicted, although so late as 1879 an undoubted authority on the subject states that a case occurred in Western India, when the barren wife of an influential native official caused a boy of eight to be kidnapped, taken into the temple, where the child's throat was cut, and his blood sprinkled over the idol; the wretched woman instigating the murder to propitiate the deity into granting her offspring!

Some years later, they were building the State Railway bridge across a big river in South India. The engineer in charge of the project had already established a great reputation as a successful bridge-builder in the Punjaub, to which province he belonged, so when *asked* to go South to span the river in question, he had no compunction in stipulating that he be allowed to take his seasoned Sikh workmen and artisans with him; a request which though meaning no little expense was readily granted. Well, the site of the undertaking, a small, sleepy sub-civil

station, peopled by simple, ignorant Gentoos or Telugus, was overrun by an army of proud, haughty Sikhs and Punjaubees. Ill-feeling soon sprang up between the locals and "foreigners," but without any important results till some evil-disposed Gentoo promulgated a whisper that the Northerners had sacrificed a Telugu boy to the god of the river, and that the body had been built into the first bridge-pier. Matters began to assume a serious aspect: the Northerners laughed the accusation to scorn, but all the assurances of their leading men and the European engineering staff had no conciliatory effect, and the locals only wanted a resolute leader to bring on the climax, which would have certainly ended in bloodshed; for the Gentoos, who had been rejoicing in the prospect of being employed on the operations, besides being jealous of these aliens being brought more than a thousand miles to take the bread out of their mouths, were furious that one of their boys should have been sacrificed by the strangers. There was a deadlock: work came to a standstill, and the two parties confronted each other—prepared to fall on no sooner the match was applied. However, at this crisis the Engineer-in-Chief met the difficulty by threatening to wire to a neighbouring military cantonment for troops: that station was in railway communication with the scene of the disturbance, and a force would have arrived the following day. This warning had the desired effect, and ultimately matters toned down. It is needless to add that the Punjaubees were guiltless of the charge.

Infanticide of living babes is yet another inhuman custom that the English have put a stop to; although there is little doubt that the practice still obtains in out-of-the-way localities. The method adopted was to place the child by night in an ark, presumably resembling that in which Moses was found. The vessel—provided with an oil light at one end, and the infant, decked with flowers, fastened down full-length—would be launched into the river by the mother as an offering to the deity. Occasionally the little barque ran aground near a village, when some tender-hearted woman, hearing the child's wailing, would rescue and nurture it as her own; or a carnivorous wild animal, prowling along the river bank, would make a meal of it; but generally the poor little waif would be snapped up by the first gavial or crocodile that scented a prey so conveniently at hand.

Mutilation, albeit against our laws, is still practised to a great extent. A typical case occurred not long ago—during 1906, in fact—near Madras, wherein a native of the barber caste, with the aid of his brother and sister-in-law, cruelly mutilated his wife with the red-hot handle of a large iron cooking-spoon; inflicting seven brands on her face, and utterly disfiguring it, for the burns resulted in permanently contorting the wretched woman's features; while not content with this, the husband further applied the glowing spoon-handle to each instep, also to certain other parts of her body. The miscreant could not have achieved this crime

single-handed, because the victim was young and powerful; so the local magistrate—a European—very properly regarding the brother and sister-in-law as accomplices, committed them, with the principal, to the District Sessions Court, as he did not consider the maximum award in his power—two years—sufficient punishment to meet the enormity of the offence; but strange and inexplicable to relate, the District Sessions Court—presided over by a native civilian—in disposing of the case, sentenced the husband to six months' imprisonment and acquitted the two accessaries to his crime!

Abortion is general among all classes. The prostitute finding herself enceinte, and knowing that the outward visible sign of her condition would be detrimental to her "takings," and that she would lose customers directly she was seen with a babe in her arms; the young girl, gone wrong for the first time; the over-prolific mother, dismayed at the thoughts of an additional coming mouth to fill, goaded perhaps by her husband's lamentations over the same uncomfortable prospect; the unfaithful wife, fearful of the fruits of an amour with some white man; all these require the services of the aborticide; and they are to be found everywhere; generally in the shape of superannuated prostitutes, old bawds at the end of their own profligate tether, and who supplement the business of procuring with that of destroying fœtal life. They are known to the police in stations and cantonments, and have to be most circumspect in practising their unholy calling, for if a case of abortion is reported

the police are at no loss where to look for the agent, and if the crime is proved against her, she suffers the severest punishment the Penal Code can provide. In villages and up-country these hell-hags work unhindered.

CHAPTER XV

RAILWAY TRAIN ROBBERIES

COMPARED with such happenings in America and Europe, the Indian Railway Train Robbery is a mild affair, because it is seldom if ever attended with bloodshed or even violence. In America a gang of melodramatic-looking pirates or very ordinary-looking roughs, in either case with revolvers and ammunition concealed about their persons, board a train at a station, and as soon as she has run free of the town two of the party make their way to the locomotive, and pointing their pistols at the enginemen order them to stop the train; others treat the guards —or conductors, as they are styled over there— in a similar manner; while the main body, flourishing their "six-shooters," go hectoring through the cars, calling on the passengers to "hands-up" and hand over their money and valuables. Occasionally, a stray traveller who chances to have a pistol on him, makes use of it, but before he can empty another chamber the brigands open fire on him, and riddled with bullets he falls to the carriage floor a lifeless corpse. The ruffians hastily gather up their spoil and drop off the train, which proceeds on its course, while the marauders—who have con-

federates with horses waiting for them in the adjacent chaparral—mount and ride hard, so as to put a safe distance between them and the scene of their exploit. Another method is to "hold up" a train on the run: the robbers concentrate at some desolate spot, and so place an obstruction—generally a felled sapling—across the rails that the driver can see it in time to enable him to stop short. When the train comes to a standstill, there is the same intimidation, with or without loss of life, and then the rascals, leaving it to the train people to shift aside the obstruction, make off with their booty. In England or Europe it is usually the discovery of a body, forced out of the train and lying in a tunnel, or a corpse found in an empty compartment on arrival at a station, which tells that foul play has been done, while the absence of money and valuables on the person of the victim points to robbery as the prime motive for the deed. Many such instances of comparatively recent occurrence testify to the Train Robber being very much in evidence among us, and the wonder is that the perpetrators of these crimes so often escape detection.

In Indian train robberies there is rarely any killing or wounding. To his credit be it said that the native—while in his right mind and not pushed to extremity—is not bloodthirsty, and he will not spill it lightly, or only when he is acting in self-defence. The Train Robber presents the appearance of a respectable Hindoo or Mahomedan: he is canny to his finger-tips; a past-master in the art of assuming disguises.

Without betraying in the slightest the business he has in hand, he prospects that particular portion of the railway he intends operating upon, and you may take it that he makes very sure of his premises before embarking on the enterprise. He travels up and down perhaps several times, and during these peregrinations he ascertains that between two certain stations a heavy gradient exists, down which the train runs at a furious pace, and just crawls when going in the opposite direction. He further remarks that between these said stations the line traverses jungle, and no villages are visible along the track-side : but for all that his eyes tell him, he must know something more about that jungle ; he has to reckon with it. Travelling by a down train, he alights at the lower station, *i.e.* at the foot of the incline ; he is accurately got up as a *shikaree* or hunter, in the employment of some purely imaginary European living far up the line : he tells the little knot of gaping native station officials that he is out prospecting on his master's behalf for a likely shooting-ground where big game is to be found, and asks them if the jungle between that and the upper station contains any wild animals such as tiger, cheetah, elephant, hyena, or python. If their answer is in the affirmative, the pseudo hunter simulates satisfaction, and goes on to inquire if the jungle has any villages in it, their situation, whether they lie on the route to the upper station, and so forth : all these queries being put merely to substantiate the *raison d'être* of his presence there. Should the employés say it is not a

wild-animal jungle, that it does not harbour so much as a jackal, and they ought to know considering the time they have been in that locality, the *shikaree* will pretend to be disappointed, though inwardly he rejoices exceedingly: he will ask when the next up train is due, and sit himself down disconsolately in the waiting-room, putting on a look of reserve and disgust that discourages further conversation. The train comes in: he takes a ticket, and away he goes. A day or so later, he again alights at that lower station, dressed as an ordinary native, and so transmogrified as to be totally unrecognisable by the staff. He will tell them that he has come thus far to meet a friend who is travelling by the night up mail train, and with whom he purposes journeying back: to prove his *bona fides* he will purchase a ticket for some station far up the line, buy refreshments from the solitary vender, and sit down to wait. In due course the mail train steams in and halts. Unless on a long through journey, up-country natives as a rule rather avoid travelling at night, especially by mail trains, which are slightly more expensive than the ordinary ones. Indeed, some are so averse to nocturnal travelling that those going any great distance will take tickets only to that station they can reach before sundown, and so continue on the next morning. Consequently, this mail train is not crowded: there is no hurry, for halts on an Indian railway are long and tedious. The robber, after loudly bemoaning the non-appearance of the expected "friend," seeks a comfortable corner where

he can lie full-length along the bench : he peers into carriage after carriage, during the process of which, in a second-class compartment reserved for "Native Ladies," he notices two Hindoo females, one old, the other young,—mother and daughter probably,—both adorned with jewellery, which his practised eye tells him is genuine. He hangs about a little, to ascertain if there is any male escort in some other compartment ; it being the custom at halts for the menfolk to alight and come to their females to inquire after their welfare, etc. No one appears : the robber enters an empty third-class close by, and squats there—the picture of innocence : the train starts, and directly she begins to feel the gradient, as evidenced by her diminishing speed, up the thief jumps, thrusts his head out of window on both sides, takes a careful look fore and aft, feels for the door-key wherewith he is provided, lets himself out, steps down on to the foot-board, bends double, holding on with one hand to the side rail, stealthily makes his way to that second-class compartment, pulls open or unlocks the door, and walks in. First terrorising the two women into abject silence with his menacing gestures, he proceeds to despoil them of all their valuables, but without using any violence : they offer no resistance, and fearing that worse may come, they entreat him to spare their lives. He has no other design on the helpless creatures ; he wants only what he has taken ; but before turning to quit the compartment he sternly advises them to hold their tongues, says that he is in a

neighbouring carriage, so if at the next halt they dare to make an outcry, he will rush in again and cut their throats before any one comes to their aid. He leaves, gently closing and locking the door behind him. By this time the train is slowly labouring up the incline: the robber creeps along to the end of the footboard, and without showing his head above the window level, waits till he sees a clear space on the side-path, where he jumps off, lies where he drops till the train has passed, then picking himself up, dives into the jungle—to make his way home as best he can. He has no apprehensions; he knows by previous information that there are no wild animals to be encountered, while as to human beings, he has a plausible story ready for them. In the meanwhile the train reaches the next station, but the plundered women, with the robber's parting threat ringing in their ears, dare not proclaim the outrage, and consequently no one is a bit the wiser. When the two females reach home, however, they tell their story; the menfolk promptly take train, and going to the police *tannah* or police station nearest the scene of the robbery, report the matter, and perhaps offer a reward. The police do all in their power; days pass; nothing comes of it, and thus the thief escapes scot-free.

The following unique incident occurred at Moradabad in Rohilcund, North-West India. Moradabad, where several lines converge, is an important junction station, both as regards passengers and goods, especially the latter, of which there is a great amount of transhipping

from one system to the other; consequently, the huge goods yard is always crowded with vehicles of all kinds, while unloading and reloading goes on the whole day and often far into the night. At the time alluded to, it had been ascertained that covered wagons during their stay in the Moradabad goods yard were tampered with, notably those belonging to the East India Railway. Now, this company had recently introduced a method of their own for securing their covered wagons: instead of padlocks and keys, the door-handles — after pulling-to the doors—would be reeved with a leaden ribbon, the ends of which when brought together would be riveted with a powerful die which at the same time impressed the consigning station's code name in the soft metal. In spite of this, however, the ribbon sat more or less loosely; but the puzzle was, that never did any outward sign of tampering with these ribbons manifest itself, and yet the contents of the vans were spirited away. Every investigation was made, various precautions taken, a watch set, detectives called in—all to no effect. For a while, owing to these measures, the pilfering lulled, but as soon as vigilance relaxed, the thieving recrudesced. At last, a lad named F——, son of an Eurasian railway employé, thought he had discovered a clue to the mystery, and communicating his suspicions to the local railway authorities, asked them to provide him with some disguised police, when he hoped to catch the marauders red-handed. Knowing the lad to be sharp-witted—proofs of which he had

already given—and convinced by his earnestness and confident manner of speaking, the authorities gave him *carte blanche*, and promised him a reward if successful. As soon as darkness fell, F—— and his men stealthily made their way into the goods yard by means of a rain-water vent. The night watchmen were alert, and making their usual rounds among the rows of vehicles; but the intruders managed to escape their notice, and finally concealed themselves behind some cotton bales lying on the transhipping platform, alongside which stood some East India Railway covered vans that had newly arrived, and which would not be touched till the morrow. Presently, the watchmen's alert cries grew less frequent till they ceased: then, shortly afterwards, the ambushed party saw several figures coming up the platform, amongst them a small boy. They stopped at one of the East India Railway wagons, and by the light of a lantern that one of them carried, F—— and the police beheld the solution of the mystery enacted before their very eyes. The gang first released the retaining bolts, then rolled apart the doors as far as the ribbon would permit, and this done, the small boy, divested of his clothing, was squeezed through the aperture! The rest was easy; the boy, well instructed beforehand, broke up a package and passed the contents piecemeal to the men outside, who promptly put them up into bundles preparatory to carrying off. Thus was it that those vans, secured with the leaden ribbons, could be burgled, while the fastenings remained to all appearances intact.

Goods trains on Indian railways are usually of immense length, and as a consequence extend far to rear and front of the short platforms of wayside stations. Indian trains—especially goods—make unconscionably long halts; and whether it may be night or day, when a goods train pulls up at a wayside station, and whatever shunting there may be to do is finished, there is sure to be some leisure yet ere the starting signal is given; so the guard from the tail-brake, the driver from the engine, alight on the platform and pass the interval in chatting with the station-master; while, as robberies are not unknown, the station-porters patrol the offside of the train. But though this precaution precludes the thief from removing anything out of the open wagons as they stand there, it does not prevent him from evading the porters and secreting himself, say, in a high-sided open truck, which, as he has already ascertained, is loaded with sacks of rice or other grain dear to the heart of the native. He lies perdu till the train is passing a village—*his* village—whereupon, exerting all his strength, he topples a sack or two out of the truck—clear of the wheels: his confederates who, by preconcerted arrangement, are on the look out, steal from the darkness, promptly make off with the plunder, and conceal it in their huts, while he remains where he is till the train slackens as it approaches the next station, when he jumps off directly it is safe to do so, and skulking along the fencing, or beyond it on the accommodation road, for fear of being challenged by some inquisitive mile-man, he eventually regains his

village at a late hour of the night or early hour of the morning, where his brethren regale him with an ample meal of the grain he has thus provided.

During a comparatively recent famine, the relief camps which were established all over the affected area had to be plentifully supplied with grain and other food-stuffs from the less stricken districts. Consignments of these necessaries would be sent by goods trains, for wherever the railway served, the relief camps were erected as close to the iron road as possible. Strange to say, however, it takes some time before the starving natives will seek refuge therein: they shun it till they are veritably at the last gasp; although knowing that they will be housed, fed, and clothed gratis, while the more able-bodied can earn a small money wage in addition by being put on famine relief works of more or less public utility. A railway traffic officer named S—— happened one evening to be travelling on the engine footplate of a heavy goods train bound for a big relief camp. Two stations short of her destination—where the train was not scheduled to stop, and she was approaching the distant signal—the locomotive broke down and lapsed into a crawl. Realising there was no help for it, S——, clambering to the front of the engine, shouted to the pointsman to throw over the lever for the siding: the man obeyed, and, fortunately, the train contrived to creep into the lay-by. S—— immediately wired to the nearest loco dépôt behind, reporting the breakdown, and asking for another engine to be sent along at

once. The spot was within the famine zone, but the villagers hereabout, though reduced to a pitiful state of emaciation, obstinately clung to their hearths and homes so long as a root could be had for the grubbing, a berry for the gathering, rather than enter the famine camp—only two stations ahead. The stoppage of this train was unusual: the miserable villagers, wandering about in search of anything edible they could pick up, were attracted by the sight, and soon some hundreds of them lined the wire fencing, to gaze greedily at the open trucks, piled with sacks, which, from the smell, the poor starvelings knew to contain rice and other food-stuffs. Alive to the possibility of the famished creatures "tapping" the cargo when it became dark, S—— made the best dispositions in his power for its safety. He dismounted the engine-men from their now useless locomotive, pressed the two station-porters into the service, and ordered the four to patrol up and down the line of vehicles and prevent the natives from gaining access to them, but not to use any brute force. Night fell; a young moon sailed the heavens, and there was nothing further to do but await the arrival of the relieving engine, which should reach by 9 p.m. In the meanwhile the crowd at the fencing had much increased: the news spreading, sufferers from other villages close by had joined the throng, and by eight o'clock fully five hundred of both sexes had gathered along the wire fence, whispering among themselves, accompanied with eager gesticulation. Gradually the murmur grew louder; the

men's cries of encouragement to each other to climb the fence ; the screams of women mingling with threats in English and Telugu from the engine-men and porters telling them to keep their distance. At length the voices swelled into an uproar : S—— and the native stationmaster hurried to the siding to see if they could quell the threatened disturbance ; but their appearance had no soothing effect.

" Give us food ! " shrieked the mob on seeing the European officer. " Here is plenty, while we and our children are dying from hunger ! We know that this grain is for us—starving people—sent for us by the kind Government ! "

" No, no ! " shouted S—— in Telugu, pressing them back from the fencing which they threatened to straddle. " True, the grain is for you—natives ; but it must all go to the relief camp two stations ahead. The camp has been established for you people, why do you not go and take refuge there ? "

" We will, we will ! " they howled, crowding up and regarding him wolfishly with glaring eyes. " We can hold out no longer ! We must desert our houses and lands for life, which is dearer than all ! But we have no money to pay for railway-tickets, and are not strong enough to walk twenty miles to the relief camp—of which we have heard ; so, in the name of the God you worship, bestow on us some grain which will give us strength to undertake the journey and support us on the way ! "

" That is impossible," retorted S—— firmly but reluctantly, for he longed to alleviate their

sufferings. "The load on this train is Government property, entrusted to the railway for safe conveyance to and delivery at the famine camp. I dare not touch it; so be off!"

But they would take no denial; the weak voices swelled out again; they heartened each other, and then, as if by common consent, they commenced climbing over the wire fence. S—— and his assistants endeavoured to keep them back; but what could five do against hundreds, unwilling as the former were to use any force on their skeletonised opponents? With an agility begotten of a craving for food, the natives scattered along the line of trucks, climbed the open ones in swarms, and with ghoulish glee set to unknotting the ropes that secured the covering tarpaulins. Realising that they could do no more, the railway people looked helplessly on. The looters loosened the tarpaulins, flung them aside, and with eldritch screams of triumph were throwing themselves on the now exposed grain-sacks, tearing at them, so as to stay their immediate hunger-pangs by devouring the contents raw, when a distant whistle and a light flickering up the line denoted the approach of the relieving engine. Whispering to his men to follow, S—— quietly retreated to the platform; the locomotive drew up: S—— stepped into the cab, and after a few words with the driver, took charge of the throttle, for he knew the business. Dousing the headlight, he drove slowly to the hither end of the derelict goods train, and gently hitching on, reversed, and commenced to back. The trucks swarmed with

natives, while crowds more stood alongside, prepared to receive the sacks as they were lowered to them—all insane with joy and too engrossed to dream of interruption. The movement of the train, however, accompanied by a fierce warning whistle, brought them to a realisation of what was happening: those below must have promptly skipped aside out of harm's way, as subsequent inquiry proved that no one had been injured; but those on the trucks appeared to have completely lost their heads, for instead of attempting to descend, there they crouched, screaming to be allowed to get down. S——, however, had made up his mind to run as many of the starving wretches as possible straight into the famine camp. Arrived on the main metals, and telling the stationmaster to wire "clear the line" for him, S—— again reversed and went off at a dash, pushing the train, disabled engine and all, before him. Finally, running into the relief camp siding, S—— had the satisfaction of making over to the famine authorities not only the cargo of food-stuffs almost intact, but some two hundred starvelings, who were at once admitted and cared for.

CHAPTER XVI

TAMPERING WITH RAILWAYS

THE railway men in India are quite ninety per cent. natives. Time was—and that not very long ago—when the drivers, firemen, and brakemen, the guards, the permanent-way inspectors, the loco and carriage-shop foremen, underforemen, and many of the lower grades were Europeans, out from home under covenant, or Eurasians, recruited in the country, and always found to be dependable. But nowadays we have changed all that. *Nous avons changé tout cela*, as our neighbours say, and the white man is in a most woeful minority, not only on a railway, but in almost every other concern or department of the Government service. Even the fast mail trains—to a very recent period considered sacred to an English crew—on footplate, brake, and guards' vans, are now manned by natives, or, at the best, by a solitary English or Eurasian driver, and perhaps the chief guard, with all the rest blacks. Though the vast preponderance of employés are indigenes, they have no federation or unions, no demagogues or notoriety-hunters to incite them to quarrel with their bread and butter, as their congeners command in this country. True, you hear occasionally of

some mill- or factory-hands at Bombay or other large cities coming out, but the movement soon languishes, and dies a natural death. True, again, a few years ago a somewhat serious strike occurred on the East India Railway at Calcutta, the agitation, however, being almost exclusively promoted by and confined to the European and Eurasian servants of the company : the native members took a very secondary part, and then only as passive sympathisers with their white and semi-white fellow-workers. Hence, the native Indian railway man does not resort to strikes as a forcible means whereby to proclaim his grievances, and, above all, to revenge himself for supposed wrongs or unjust treatment at the hands of his employers : he gets his pound of flesh in other ways, and that, too, without combining or leadership.

P.W. or permanent-way gangs are generally of one caste, and very often blood-relations of one family. If a ganger is transferred to another subsection, and finds his new party to be composed of a class different from himself, he will so work it as to get such men removed, fill in the gaps with members of his own caste, or even manage to have his former gang bodily shifted to his new charge. If neither of these can be effected, the ganger becomes discontented, and his men not liking a stranger of some other, perhaps objectionable sect, do not obey him. The P.W. Inspector knows this ; the District Engineer also knows this, and that there is no remedy ; so the ganger generally gets his own way, and there is no more trouble. But,

influenced by a strong inherent spirit of clannishness, a gang party will stand or fall together, and if one is dismissed, whether justly or unjustly in their estimation, the rest at once express a wish to resign, and if the resignation is not accepted, they give up their tools at the store-shed and leave. All gangers and gangsmen are inhabitants of those hamlets close on to the railway line; so when any ructions of the nature above alluded to happen, the men have not far to go: they retire to their villages—to resume agrarian life, also to brood over their wrongs—real or imaginary—and very probably to hatch mischief against the railway company that may have been their source of livelihood for years.

An old retired European P.W. foreman described to the author how, when he was in the service of a railway that traversed a jungly district, the down night mail train was derailed four miles from the nearest station, where he—the foreman—lived. The derailment took place on a curve at the foot of an up-gradient in the heart of a patch of heavy jungle. Fortunately, the accident happened to the down mail, so no one was killed or injured; but had it occurred to the up mail, which ran over the spot down the incline at high speed, there would have been an awful catastrophe. On the news being brought in by a night watchman, he—the foreman—with the Traffic Manager, who happened to be at the said station on inspection, after wiring to stop the up mail, hurried on a light engine to the scene of the upset, where, on examining

the line, they found the fishplates of a rail unbolted, the retaining wooden wedges knocked out, and the rail displaced. The locality having a bad reputation for *dayums* or spooks, there was no likelihood of any one being about during the night except the watchman, and he passed only once between sunset and sunrise; so, as soon as the patrol had gone his way, there was nothing to hinder any evil-disposed persons from tampering with the line at that particular place. Suspicion centred on a gang of the shepherd caste, who had recently been dismissed by the District Engineer for supposed pilfering of sleepers, although the theft had not been proved against them. This derailment, it was thought, must be the handiwork of these dismissed gangers, who lived in a village about a mile from the railway, and who had adopted this means of revenging themselves. A breakdown train with staff soon arrived: the Traffic Manager, taking the foreman with him, returned to the station and hurriedly summoned the Police Inspector, who, after learning all particulars of the case, stated it as his opinion that the derailment had been brought about by the dismissed men out of pure revenge, that they were in hiding close by when the catastrophe occurred, and that, finding no Europeans had been killed or injured, the miscreants would lose no time in repeating the attempt—and at the same spot. The Inspector—a Hindoo—was known to the Traffic Manager as a sharp officer, one who could be fully trusted, and on the former giving him a free hand to act, he

dispatched the cleverest of his constables—disguised as a religious mendicant—to the shepherds' village to pick up whatever information he could. The man returned the next day, and said that the whole village sympathised with their dismissed brethren; they were determined to wreak a fearful vengeance on the railway company, and that the outrage was to be carried out that very night—this time on the up mail, so as to make it more disastrous. They confined their nefarious attentions to the only two night trains—the up and down mails—which the villains knew had no third-class, crowded with native passengers, and thus would avoid injury to people of their own colour. The down mail would pass the spot at about 10.30 p.m., and the up at 1.30 a.m. When the Traffic Manager asked the Inspector why he imagined the ruffians would pitch on the same place, the policeman explained that besides being a lonely locality, and suited to their purpose, the wreckers would choose it to save themselves trouble, for it was no light task to unbolt two pairs of fishplates rusted and jammed from exposure; to do so would require several men, whereas the freshly oiled bolts of that lately reinstated rail would be easily negotiated by a single individual. Well, as soon as it became dark enough for them to slip away unperceived, the Traffic officer, the P.W. foreman—carrying revolvers—the Police Inspector, with two constables—all armed, and under the guidance of the pseudo-mendicant, who knew every inch of the country, pushed through the jungle by a circuitous route

A DEHLIWAL BAURIAH 'KAMAOO'

and reached the spot without having been observed. The rail that had been meddled with and subsequently readjusted was plainly distinguishable by the disturbed metalling along it and sundry débris of the derailment which the breakdown gang had not considered worth removal. After a short whispered consultation, the Traffic officer and the P.W. foreman climbed a tree on one side of the track, while the police party similarly ensconced themselves on the other. It was agreed that as soon as the wreckers well started work, the Police Inspector would blow his whistle, whereat they were to drop from the trees, rush forward, and effect a surround.

They sat and sat: an intense stillness reigned —broken only by the occasional cries of night-birds: the moon climbed higher and topped the trees. They consulted their watches—half-past ten. Hardly had they done so when they heard a low rumble, then the pulsating pant of a labouring locomotive, and the down mail breasted the incline: in three hours more the up mail would rattle down in the contrary direction. The racket died out; the moon rose yet higher and now shone full on the track. Time passed; they again looked at their watches—one o'clock! At this moment a faint metallic clink fell on the air; and there, stealing out from the thicket, appeared the form of a native: he carried something across his shoulder, which, when he emerged into the moonlight, proved to be a crowbar and a large S-shaped wrench, the chief implements of the railway ganger! Ascending

the bank, he proceeded to verify the policeman's prognostications by setting to work on the identical rail that had been tampered with before, and recently refixed in its place. The bolts and nuts—newly oiled—came away freely; he tapped out all four, and the fishplates fell off from the rail-web. He rose, and was moving to the other joint when the whistle sounded; down they all dropped—the police on one side, the two Europeans on the other, and bounding forward they secured the wretch, who made no attempt to escape, and who turned out to be the dismissed ganger. He said nothing, and stood quietly between two constables, while the rest of the party busied themselves in feverishly refixing the fishplates, which they had scarcely accomplished when the mail train came thundering down the slope and passed safely over the spot.

At all but the larger more important stations the semaphore arrangements are very simple: two distant and one home signal being about all. No more is required, really, for the track, as a rule, is single, and very often there are less than a dozen trains in the twenty-four hours. The home signal—common to both up and down—stands at one end of the station platform, and is governed by an ordinary handle, geared to the foot of the post, while the distant signals are controlled by a four-stranded wire rope connected to a pair of throw-over levers, also on the platform near the home signal. One signalman manages the whole of this primitive apparatus, which, of course, is looked after and

maintained in efficient working condition by the engineering department; besides that, the stationmaster is required to keep an eye on it, so the arrangement seldom gets out of order—unless tampered with.

One morning a train approaching a wayside station was stopped by the distant signal being against her. Apparently there was no cause, for the driver commanded a clear view of the station, and seeing all clear he kept whistling till a commotion ensued on the platform, which indicated something after all to be wrong. The Hindoo stationmaster and others gesticulated; they then rushed with one accord to the signal lever, and repeatedly threw it both ways without effort, for there was no resistance, and the semaphore arm remained rigidly up! Then when the stationmaster had flag-signalled the train in, it chanced that among the native passengers who alighted was a Mahomedan police constable—returning from leave to his *tannah* or station in the village. This man, hurrying away, speedily came back, accompanied by his *havildar* or sergeant—both in uniform. The nigh demented stationmaster was still storming at his assembled subordinates, vainly endeavouring to get at the cause of the signal failing to work, for he would be held responsible, and, in the absence of satisfactory explanation, would be liable to lose his berth. Walking in among the group of railway servants, the Mahomedan caught the signalman by the wrist, and drew him forward.

"*Maharaj*!" (Great King! common term of respect for a Hindoo) said the constable,

addressing the stationmaster in vernacular, "I know this man bears an enmity for you. Shortly before I left on leave last week you reported him for negligence in his work to the *Sahib* (European superior), and got him fined, did you not?"

"Yes; the *Sahib* stopped eight annas from his wages, and I recovered the fine."

"Well, I was on duty here that day, and overheard him muttering curses, and vowing to pay you out. I half expected, on my rejoining, to hear that he had wreaked a mischief on you in some manner or other, and when the train was stopped by the signal just now, for no obvious reason, I at once suspected foul play on the part of this fellow. Question him in our presence."

"Have you been meddling with the signal, rascal?" demanded the stationmaster, still in a state of fury.

"No," replied the man sullenly; "why should I? The wire must be broken."

"Fool!" laughed the *havildar* scornfully; "in that case the signal would be down, not up!"

"Right!" agreed the Moslem. "*Maharaj*," he added to the stationmaster, "have you examined the wire between this and the distant signal?"

"Not yet; I was just going to."

"Then," observed the *havildar*, making a move, "let us all go and see if we can find anything. Bring him along, *Meah*," to the Mahomedan constable, and alluding to the suspect.

The signal wire became slacker and slacker

as they progressed, till finally, about a hundred yards from the platform, they came upon an end of the wire rope lying limp upon the side-path, while the other end seemed to have somehow been entangled in the support-slot containing the running wheel. Anyhow, it was taut, and kept the signal arm at the up!

"Now, what have you to say?" demanded the constable.

"Nothing," replied the signalman boldly. "Am I answerable for the wire breaking?"

"Then how did it become fixed—as we now find it?"

"*Narayen* (God) knows; I do not. Probably the jerk of snapping must have caused it to catch."

"The jerk of snapping, eh?" remarked the astute Moslem, after stooping and scrutinising the ends of the severed wire. "You say that the rope broke of itself?"

"Of course it did—at some weak or worn spot. How else?"

"Liar!" hissed the policeman, holding up the rope ends for general inspection. "How then to account for these marks? The strands have been half-filed through all round! Who did it?"

"I did not do it; nor can I tell who did."

Saying no more, the Mahomedan, leading the signalman with him, returned to the platform, followed by the rest. Going direct to the man's sentry-box near the levers, the constable, consigning the suspect to the *havildar's* keeping, proceeded to examine the sentry-box, where,

sure enough, after a little search, he discovered, concealed in the interstices of the wooden pent-roof, a small file which bore distinct traces not only of having been recently used, but used on something that shimmered—nothing more or less than the galvanised coating of the strands forming that wire rope! The culprit eventually appeared at the District Sessions, and on the ample evidence furnished, was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, while that constable received a reward from the railway company, and a step in the police force.

On an Indian railway there is generally a spare strip of ground running parallel on both sides of the metals, either level therewith or in the form of banks, and guarded by substantial wire fencing. In the case of cuttings this fencing is carried along the brow of the elevation, so that nowhere can the permanent way be trespassed on by straying cattle. Now, owing to it being so efficiently protected, the pasturage within this fencing is, as a natural consequence, better than that outside, on which the village herds browse; and it often happens that while scarcely a blade of grass can be seen on the adjoining lands, there is plenty of it within that invidious barrier. The inhabitants of hamlets lying near the line see this; they know it is no use asking the railway authorities to farm the ground, and allow them to drive their herds in through the level-crossing gate to graze on the herbage that grows to waste within the fencing. They try and seduce the level-crossing gate-keeper to let a few of their animals through

between train-times: the gatekeeper dares not for his life comply. Supposing a special or an extra ballast comes along, of which he never gets a notice? Suppose the P.W. Inspector or District Engineer himself suddenly trollies up round the curve? Or if the mile-man should not agree to go shares in their bribe, and finding the cattle on the line, tell against him? So the baffled villagers overcome the difficulty themselves. A short way up or down the line the undergrowth is so thick that it half hides the wire fencing. Bribing one of the Engineer's gang coolies who lives in their village, they get him to cut the two centre wires of the fencing, terminate them—this side and that—on two consecutive uprights, and thus leave a passage for the stunted cattle of the country, the sheep, and the goats to pass through. The villagers know almost to a minute when the night trains—generally not more than two or three—are due: they watch till the patrol-man with his hand-lamp passes up or down; they know he will not come again that night, so, directly he is safely gone, they urge their beasts through the gap and let them graze till train-time, when they are all driven out again, and after the train has vanished, another batch goes in. This continues until there is a run-over, or a special of some sort unexpectedly comes, and the driver sees the animals on the line. In either case investigation is set on foot; in the former the villagers swear the brute killed or maimed does not belong to them; in the latter they are at a loss to account for their creatures having strayed

on to the track, unless it is owing to the remissness of the gatekeeper. However, the railway authorities institute a search ; the gap is found, and promptly closed ; the villagers vow they know nothing about it ; but the Magistrate thinks otherwise and fines them heavily for the trespass.

CHAPTER XVII

TAMPERING WITH THE TELEGRAPH

In India a telegraph line is menaced by certain dangers which are not known or heard of in this country. Jungle fires—the result of spontaneous combustion (?) generated by the intense heat of summer; malice—prepense or otherwise—on the part of natives; wild beasts, especially elephants, reptiles, and even insects are so many potentialities to be reckoned with in the maintenance of the *bijlee tappal*, or "lightning post," as electrical communication used to be called in North India, though now it is universally known by the appellation "Telgrâp." Wild elephants delight in scratching themselves against the squared wooden posts—with angularities wanting in the smooth rounded tree-trunks—to end in prostrating the former after a few rubs, the easier if standing on moist ground. Monkeys have been known to crowd on to a span of unchecked wire resting on wooden posts, and drawing in the slack from each side by their own weight, bring the conductor in contact with the earth, and thus cause interruption. Snakes of a certain species and in certain localities—generally paddy or rice fields—climb the posts,—how is a question for

savants to answer,—get entangled among the wires, become electrocuted, and, lying dead across perhaps several conductors (wires) with a part of the body touching the iron post, entail "contact" or "leakage." Cell-building insects of the bee tribe — apparently impervious to electricity in any shape — will make a hive on a posthead, enveloping wire, insulators, and brackets in the structure, another cause of bad work: the white ant will attack wooden supports, and eat them until they collapse—a mass of ligneous pulverulence, dropping the wires to the ground and creating "dead earth"; while the great beetle-borer will perforate a post through and through till it literally tumbles to pieces. But by far transcending these and other pests of the like kind is the human biped—the native, *i.e.* the idle native. The adult villager, as a rule, is a harmless individual, especially when in the wilds, and entertains an almost superstitious respect for all things the property of Government. But there are exceptions; all are not so inoffensive, and of these the cowherd or goatherd boy heads the list. The root of all his evil lies in his idleness: he cannot read or work at any handicraft while tending his charge: he has no taste for bird-nesting, butterfly-catching, or any such pursuit dear to the heart of the English lad; so when nothing else presents itself, he bethinks him of the telegraph line passing across his grazing-ground. As long as iron-hooded insulators were in vogue, that telegraph line enjoyed immunity at the hands of the grazier-boy, but as soon as non-hooded insulators

of white porcelain were introduced, they proved a veritable attraction to this imp of Satan. Those glistening white cups are admirable marks to throw stones at, and he practises his skill on a succession of them with fiendish glee. During recent years, when lines have become multiple, with wires resting on white porcelain insulators, it is nothing unusual to come on a whole string of posts bearing six or more wires—with all their insulators broken or chipped by stone-throwing. The police are sometimes successful in tracing and apprehending the perpetrators, but they generally get off through lack of evidence, for they will not tell against each other; they take care not to lift a stone while anybody is by; and even when they are convicted, they are generally awarded no severer punishment than a few strokes of the rattan, a week's lock-up, or some similarly nominal penalty. Imposing a fine on the village nearest to the site of the damage used to be tried; but this so incensed the villagers that insulators were found broken in greater numbers than ever, so the fining measure had to be abandoned.

Till within recent years the bulk of the wires on Indian telegraph lines consisted of No. 1 Birmingham gauge, weighing 1250 lb. to the mile: it was of iron, with a galvanised outer coating, and about the thickness of a Faber's red-and-blue pencil. India is—*par excellence*—the land of snakes, more or less poisonous, some fatally so; and moving about in the dark is attended with much risk, especially to villagers up-country, who walk barefooted

or wear a kind of open sandal which really affords no protection to the foot except the sole. The most efficient and most convenient safeguard against the reptiles—resorted to by many Europeans as well—is to go armed with an iron rod, hooked at the top like a walking-stick, buttoned like a foil at the bottom, threaded with some loose iron rings, and the resultant jingling of the rings—produced by the carrier stumping this rod as he goes along—frightens away all snakes that may be lurking in the path. The heavy telegraph wire above alluded to made an ideal "snake-rod," and when any of this is condemned as further unserviceable, and sold by public auction at headquarter store dépôts, it is eagerly bought up at remunerative prices. This, of course, is in towns: neighbouring villagers—coming in to market—may be able to purchase some of the wire to convert into the much-sought-after protective rods; but what about the yokel living farther afield? He has heard of and believes in the efficacy of the iron "jingle-stick," and would like to have one; but how is he to get it? He is not going to trudge perhaps fifty miles to yonder town for the purpose: on the other hand, the snake season is imminent; last year he lost a fellow-villager through cobra-bite, and he consequently yearns to possess one of those rods. Again—how? His evil mentor answers the question by drawing his attention to the recently erected telegraph line skirting the village; six wires, and one of them much thicker than the others—in fact, of *the* coveted gauge. His awe for

things governmental threatens to give way to a desire for some of that thick wire; but the prize is beyond his reach: how is he to get at and cut it, strained up as it is like a fiddle string? Then, if he did contrive to cut it, supposing the mischief is brought home to him, and the police carry him off to jail? While he stands there cogitating, and his eyes follow the line of posts, he notices for the first time several consecutive supports situated on low ground—subject to water during the rainy season: these supports are each fitted with a pair of cross-guys—to give them additional stability. Now, the said cross-guys are composed of 1250 wire, the very stuff he hankers for: they are accessible; he can take a piece, and should the loss be discovered, and he becomes implicated, he can say that he saw one of the village bullocks entangle itself by the horns in the cross-guy, and while struggling to get free the animal snapped the wire, and with a piece of it trailing from its horns, ran away into the jungle. Having prepared this story he takes two flint stones, one in each hand, and pounds one of those guy-wires between them till he severs it: then more pounding cuts off the necessary length, which he promptly carries off to the village blacksmith and requests him to fashion it into a snake-rod. The man of iron asks the customer how he obtained the wire: the yokel, describing the locality of the cross-guyed posts, tells his already prepared bullock story, with this addition that, when the animal ran into the jungle with the piece of wire dangling

from its horns, he gave chase, and recovered the wire, which he would make use of rather than let it rust on the ground. The blacksmith—perhaps given to mendacity himself—guesses that the villager is telling a lie : the jagged ends of the piece plainly betray how it was obtained ; but the craftsman makes no rejoinder ; agrees to do the needful, and names his price, to which the villager agrees, and shows that he has the money about him. The blacksmith starts work ; the first step being to heat off the outer galvanising with which the wire is coated. This the villager objects to ; he does not want the rod to be denuded of its shimmering cover, and tells the blacksmith so. "Donkey!" exclaims the latter; "how will you escape punishment if, when the telegraph people see the damage, and, not believing your bullock story, set the police on the scent, and they find the white rod in your possession?" The villager sees the force of the blacksmith's argument, and says no more.

As the finale to an extensive reconstruction of the telegraph lines on the south bank of the river Godavery at Rajahmundry, the officer in charge of the operations had to erect an elaborate junction post where all the wires met and were terminated, continuity being preserved by means of thin wire spirals bridging the gaps between each pair of corresponding insulators. The arrangement is worthy of a little description. The junction post itself was a quadruplicate (quadripod?) of heavy iron standards clamped together—top, bottom, and

middle—guyed, and fitted with terminal insulators set in terminal brackets. On marking the spot for this structure, close to a hamlet, the villagers demurred, saying that their ground was being encroached on: the officer retorted by pointing out that the orders of Government gave him the right to erect a telegraph post wherever the exigencies of the service might demand, and that if they doubted his statement they had better go to the District Collector and inquire. If this answer did not convince the yokels, it quietened them for the time; they did not interfere, and looked on in silence, angrily, as the telegraph officer was not slow to perceive. During the work, the officer either sat on a camp-stool or moved about directing operations; but when the erection was completed, he climbed the post to personally solder on the delicate spiral bridges. While perched up there doing this, the villagers—excited by curiosity—approached, and asked civilly enough why the *Doragaru* (lord, white gentleman), who had hitherto merely superintended, should now take tools in his hands and labour like a native. The officer explained that what he was doing represented the most important item in the whole undertaking, and which none of his people were capable of performing. The work finished, the party hastened back to Rajahmundry, where—at the telegraph office—the officer was glad to find communication perfect with Bezvada, the neighbouring station to the south. The next morning, however, when the office opened for business, dead interruption

existed on the section! Having his suspicions, the officer—providing himself with all necessaries, and taking his portable testing apparatus—accompanied the interruption line-man, crossed the river, and went straight to that junction post, fully expecting to find that it had been bodily wrecked by the indignant villagers. No; the post stood; but, on climbing it, he discovered the spiral bridges to be severed. Though the same villagers were there, all wearing looks of innocence, the officer made no sign, made no inquiries, for he well knew that without some proof it was useless to tax the people with having committed the damage; nor would the police have been of any service. So, pretending to take no notice of the spectators, although he was studying their faces all the while, he hooked on with his testing instrument, and being able to communicate perfectly with the offices on both sides, thus made sure that no other break or fault existed. He therefore soldered on fresh spiral bridges, which done, to allay suspicion he asked the villagers to supply him with some plantains and milk: these refreshments were readily produced and liberally paid for: then, in the hearing of the villagers, the officer expressed his opinion to the line-man that some large nocturnal bird must have broken the spirals by sitting on them, and that next week thicker wire bridges would have to be put on. After resting awhile, he ordered his follower to gather up the tools and come along, as he had something important to attend to at Rajahmundry—all this for the edification

of the listening yokels. Taking the back track, the two proceeded along the canal bank till well out of sight of that village, when they dived into a patch of jungle, and remained concealed there till darkness fell: then retracing their steps, they reached the vicinity of the village, and hid behind a big tree-trunk near the junction post, and watched. They had not long to wait. In about half an hour, just as an old moon rose, a number of figures—two bearing a bamboo ladder—stole out of the huts: they came to the junction post, erected the ladder against it, and two men climbed up—one after another: they were about setting to work when the lurkers slipped out of their cover and rushed forward with loud shouts. Those below—recognising the form of the dreaded white man—fled; those on the post were caught *in flagranti delicto*: they had nothing to say; they descended at the command and meekly accompanied their captors, who, losing no time, for fear of rescue, quickly made off, ferried across the river, and lodged their prisoners in the cantonment police lock-up, the officer and his assistant remaining at the police station for the rest of the night. Then, in the morning, when the Magistrate's Court opened, the case was tried, and on the evidence of the telegraph men, the culprits were sentenced to imprisonment. The tamperers in their defence tried to justify themselves on the score that the telegraph officer was trespassing on the private property of the villagers in erecting that post on that spot; but when this was argued as untenable, the magistrate asked the

prisoners why, if they resented the presence of that junction post on their holdings, did they not vent their spleen in some other way, such as cutting away the guys, breaking the insulators by stone-throwing, or digging the entire thing up, instead of confining their attentions to the spiral bridges. "Because," whined they, "we thought those thin wires to be the most important of all, as the *Doragaru* himself had fitted them with his own hands, whereas the rest of the work had been done by his followers." So much for the shallowness of native ratiocination!

During the earlier days of the telegraph in India, timber supports were used, either of teak or a certain kind of wood called *seesum*—very hard, close-grained, and of a whitish colour. These posts proved very durable; they were erected in the 'Fifties, and where not attacked by white ants, they survived up to a comparatively recent period. On the introduction of hollow galvanised iron standards, and previous to their general adoption, the iron posts were erected promiscuously—wherever the wooden ones were found to be no longer serviceable. In the course of a working season, when a sufficient number of these worn-out timber supports were eliminated from the telegraph line, and collected at some village, a public auction would be held, and the old wooden posts sold to the highest bidder. Now, while on his repair inspections, the telegraph officer would be accompanied by a certain complement of trained line-men on the permanent establishment; but for unskilled labour or coolies he always depended on the

villages *en route* : men engaged at this hamlet on a daily wage, agreeing, in the headman's presence, to work up to the next, where a fresh batch would be employed. The consequences were that these men picked up some knowledge of telegraph operations—a knowledge which they were ready to abuse, as the following will show. Say a *ryot* or cultivator buys a couple of unserviceable posts at an auction, as above alluded to : he finds on closer subsequent examination that the wood is too far gone for his purposes—generally to make a plough, a yoke, or to repair his hut with. He looks enviously at the sound posts still standing on the telegraph line that runs past the village, and wishes that he had obtained two of them for his money at the auction. Then a thought strikes him : the telegraph repair party have long since cleared off, and will not be returning for some weeks : on the homeward march they will not minutely examine the line post by post, as they are now doing, but will proceed by double stages, keeping to the road, with just an eye on the line—to see that there's nothing seriously wrong. The *ryot* seeks out some of those of his fellow-villagers who have been employed as telegraph coolies, and after finding them open to a bribe, makes an appointment with three men outside his hut at midnight, and instructs them to bring their digging implements. When all is quiet they carry the two auctioned posts to a spot on the telegraph line, where the *ryot* has already marked down two good supports standing in it, when, without allowing the wire to touch the ground, and thus cause inter-

ruption, they erect the auctioned posts in lieu of the two good ones, conceal all traces of freshly disturbed earth, carry the plunder to the *ryot's* hut, receive their reward, and go away. As soon as it is light, the *ryot* fetches the village carpenter, sets him to work on the timber, and thus destroys all chances of discovery. The coolies keep counsel; no one is a bit the wiser, and the chances are that the telegraph repair party—on their next tour—will take down those very posts and again put them up to auction!

While, as above shown, the natives are far from guiltless of tampering with the telegraph, on the other hand I have known them to prove most helpful in the restoration and maintenance of communication when the lines may have come to grief within their ken, and before repair parties could reach the spot. They are aware that the wires must not touch earth or water—a primary telegraph law which they seem to have learnt intuitively, or perhaps from those of them who may have been employed by us at various times. I will give a personal experience or two.

While inspecting the line in Assam, I reached a river which the single wire crossed on two tall wooden (bamboo) masts. A storm had evidently blown down one of these masts, and the wire fallen into the stream, meaning a dead interruption of more or less duration till repair parties could arrive, but for a village boatman, who, witnessing the disaster, dropped with his boat down the current, grasped the wire where it was above water, and hauling on it hand over

hand to about the centre of the span, tied the wire to his boat-thwart, and, thus fastened, allowed the current to carry the craft along till the slack ended, thereby causing the canoe to buoy up the wire clear of the water between the "check-post" on one bank, and the still standing mast on the other, by this means restoring and preserving communication. The boatman told me he had been there ever since the previous afternoon, when he saw the mast fall; and aware that the wire should not touch earth or water, he had rescued it as described—in the hope of being rewarded by the telegraph authorities. When I asked him what he would have done had not I and my crowd so fortuitously turned up, he said that he knew an interruption party was sure to come along from one or other of the telegraph stations on either side, and that he would have held on till they appeared; moreover, as he had some food with him in the boat, he was prepared to wait. I hooked on with my portable Morse sounder, spoke the nearest office, who informed me that a forty-minute interruption had been on during the foregoing afternoon, ceasing as suddenly as it commenced. This substantiating the boatman's story, I amply compensated him, made the necessary repairs, and went on.

Inspecting down in Travancore, I entered a dense palm grove with a small village in it, which the telegraph line skirted. It was the rainy season, and the spot a veritable morass, where several of the telegraph supports had fallen into the mire. As we approached, I saw a

row of seated natives, so engrossed, chattering and laughing so loudly, that they did not notice our approach. Curious to ascertain what they were about, I advanced alone, and perceived that they had raised the fallen wire on logs of palm wood; nowhere did the conductor touch the slush, and thus had these poor people averted a stoppage—perhaps of days. But what amused them? There they squatted, alongside of the wire, touching it at intervals, and hastily withdrawing their hands amid howls of laughter. Presently I announced myself and asked them what they were at. As soon as they recovered from their amazement at my unlooked-for appearance, one of them said, "Sir, the posts fell during last night's heavy rain, and this morning, when we attempted to tie the wire to the trees, we felt it sting our hands. We were frightened, and dropped the wire, but recollecting that it ought not to touch the mud, we pushed logs under it. We were anxious to find out how the wire stung us, sir, therefore we were laughing."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SOCIAL EVIL

THERE is no "caste" reserved for the man who debases himself by pandering to this universal vice: nor is he confined to any particular grade of Society: he may be any one, from a man holding a respectable position under Government, nevertheless willing to dishonour himself for the sake of preferment, down to the lowest wretch who depends on the vilest of all callings for picking up a despicable livelihood. But while pandering is regarded with loathing by every respectable native, whatever his state, there are individuals even of the upper orders who, with self-interest for a mainspring, will not scruple to stoop to its committal. The practice does not obtain so much among themselves as it does between ruled and rulers; the former being on their own ground, so to speak, require no aid in getting what they want. The native—married or single — who yields to the vice generally suits himself with a paid concubine, who is at his beck and call, for incontinence *per se* is not held in the same reprehensible light as it is with us: the "two-establishment" arrangement need not be resorted to *sub rosa* by the native as by the white man. True,

ructions, connubial squabbles occur occasionally, ending sometimes in bloodshed; but this is oftener the case in villages than in towns, and where bucolic unsophistication has prevented the yokel from acquiring the practice of incontinence.

For purposes of the theme it is better to say at once that a large proportion of our countrymen in India indulge to an inordinate extent in carnality, and of these there are some who will have naught to do with the avowed *fille de joie*: she is too easily accessible, too hackneyed; and perhaps prudence causes these fastidious ones to shun her who is so admirably described in the Book of Proverbs: anyhow, they will have nothing to do with the common courtesan; and it is here that the pander comes in. He is well known to the servants, having already promised them a *douceur* to fetch him should the master ever require his services. Half a dozen of the same kidney may have held out similar inducements to the domestics, who of course keep in mind the highest bidder, find out his name, place of residence, and go straight to him should the master give the order. Well, the master does give the order, and the pander is produced. After settling the terms—a matter always to be completed first—the employer describes what he wants; the employé engages to furnish a "subject," in accordance with the given specification, hies away, and in a short while reappears escorting a conveyance of some sort, out of which steps the "subject"—European, Eurasian, or native, as the case may be. The

agent receives the stipulated fee, and being instructed at what hour the conveyance is to return, he goes away—to pass the interval at the nearest arrack-shop and spend a portion of his ill-gotten gains in strong drink. But he has yet more money to earn over the transaction. At the time appointed he again shows at the house with the carriage; the "subject" is driven away, and when out of the gate she pays the pander the amount previously agreed upon: he vanishes; she continues homeward, and so the matter ends.

At larger towns with European cantonments, the hackney-carriage driver—answering to our "cabby"—is quite ready to take on himself the office of pander: indeed, it is a lucrative branch of his business. There are no recognised cab-ranks except in the three Presidency cities; but the hackman is generally to be found by after-dinner time in waiting at gates of hotels, clubs, chummeries—in fact, wherever the Englishman most does congregate, and from among whom the Jehu is almost certain of picking up a fare. Well, a *sahib* (white man) comes out and hastily makes for the nearest vehicle: the driver jumps down from his box, opens the door, closes it on the *sahib*, climbs to his seat, and makes a move, without a word having passed between the two; for the native guessing what the *sahib* is bent on, that he wishes to escape observation, and that lack of discretion on his part would be visited with condign punishment, he first makes an offing, halts in some quiet spot, and asks for instructions, which when received, away he

drives again, chuckling at the prospect of earning good money over the job. In due course, after waiting perhaps half the night, he reconveys his fare to his residence, and leaves, amply satisfied with what the master has bestowed. Now, that coachman has seen his fare's face in the glare of the carriage-lamp, and perchance is aware who he is: the man might make use of this knowledge by demanding hush-money under threat of exposure; but to his credit be it said that that very cabby may drive his passenger of the night before to office or business the next morning without betraying the least sign of recognition; while, as for it being the other way about, the lower-grade natives have such a general family resemblance, that his late fare does not know his late driver from Adam.

These people are very keen in gauging the morality of those Europeans with whom they have dealings. Say, a new arrival—civil or military—comes to a station: it is not long before he shows his colours: if they lean towards carnality, his servants are soon aware of it; the news spreads; the pander offers his services, and expectancy runs high. Be that as it may, the officer happens to have some subordinate under him who is anxious for a preferment. This individual has no particular recommendation in his favour, otherwise he would have prospered, and had no need to stoop to dishonour as a means of advancement. He hears of his new superior's inclinations, and resolves to make capital out of them by ministering thereto: he is desperate, and will resort to any infamy so

long as he obtains his end. Out of office hours, therefore, he will approach the officer, and after cunningly leading him on to the topic, preserving the most respectful mien and language, he will descant on the risks of contracting a certain contagious disease, and remark what a pity it would be were "his lordship" to become affected thereby, which would be very probable if he patronised the open market, for the "subjects" on sale there were notoriously unhealthy, and so on. The officer now fathoming the man's drift and admitting the logic of his observations, asks him to speak out, whereupon, coming closer, he says in a whisper that he is prepared to yield his "young virgin sister to your lordship's lofty patronage, provided your lordship will look mercifully on me—a poor man with many souls to support, and bestow promotion on your suppliant," or words according to that effect. The officer, if he is possessed of nicer feeling, will indignantly spurn the offer, horrified at the idea of any man wishing to consign his sister to ruin as a sop to secure his own welfare, and he will perhaps dismiss the villain on the spot; but there are others—sad to relate—who agree to such infamous proposals, frequently resulting in satisfaction for all parties concerned, and nothing untoward occurs unless the authorities hear of the compact, when it goes without saying that all those implicated therein have to suffer the direst consequences.

There is a man living in India now, honoured, respected, the chairman or president of several charitable and social institutions, who embarked

on a most promising career, and bid fair to rise high up, which, by the way, he failed in accomplishing. He had not been long in employment ere it became known that he was the victim of a certain depraved taste. Drawing good pay, and also possessing private means, this man could indulge *ad lib.* in his criminal propensity. A pander, in the person of a native subordinate, was soon forthcoming, and became a resident at his master's house, always following him into the districts, and by means of intimidating the villagers, coupled with the lavishing of money, could generally find a "subject" for his employer, however small the village might be where they were encamped. That vile parasite feathered his nest well during a lengthy connection with this man: he bought land with the proceeds of his iniquity, and lived—and still may be living—in comfort if not affluence.

S——, a good officer but a noted sensualist, was given charge of an engineering work right away in the wilds, where the authorities hoped he would have no opportunity of indulging his propensity. He took *muccadums* or overseers, bricklayers, masons, blacksmiths, carpenters, etc., with him from the cantonments; but for unskilled labour he would have to depend on the local hamlets round about. Very soon after the party had settled down in camp, some of the followers made known S——'s proclivities to the *maistries* or gangers who supplied the village coolies, and straightway these wretched toadies, with a view to winning the master's goodwill, paraded a number of women and girls,

ostensibly for employment on earth-carrying, but really in hopes that the *Sahib's* favour might fall on any of the females. Stolid, ignorant, half-savage creatures, they were easily terrorised by the *maistries* into agreeing to submit themselves—the more readily as the villains worked on their cupidity by holding out the tempting prospect of money to be gained. The consequences were that, whenever he felt inclined, S——, after evening muster, would make his choice ; the selected one would hasten home, don gala attire, steal back to the camp, and steal out of it early next morning—with more rupees in her possession than could be earned by a month of toil. Of course, the *maistry* concerned made his money too, not only from S——, but by a tax levied on the " subjects." A spirit of greedy rivalry was kindled among the gangers, and the report spreading that riches were to be acquired by so simple a process, women and girls flocked in from remoter villages in such numbers that the camp was practically mobbed by them. While matters were thus, S—— was suddenly recalled for duty elsewhere—a rather eccentric man named B—— relieving him. The *maistries* and the females were complacent enough so long as it was another *Sahib* who came, for they thought that all white men must be alike. But it just happened that B—— was a direct antithesis to S——, being a strict ascetic in those matters wherein his predecessor gave himself unbridled license. When, therefore, the village belles, emboldened by their previous intercourse with S——, and egged on by the *maistries*, made

unequivocal advances towards B——, and he realised their purport, he was so shocked, that, indignantly bidding the whole crew begone, he sat down and wrote, begging to be relieved of his duties at that particular spot, as he found the camp to be a sink of iniquity, which, however well it might suit others, was in his eyes an unutterable abomination.

Famines—which are of frequent occurrence in all parts of the country—place native female virtue at a terrible discount; starvation forcing many a hitherto respectable woman into a readiness, even eagerness, to barter her chastity for a trifle, and at the same time converting the men—fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons—into so many panders. The following is the result of the writer's own observations during one of these terrible visitations. The whole province writhed and groaned in the grip of a severe famine, and in order to mitigate the general distress, relief works were started and contiguous famine camps or shelters established at conveniently central spots all over the stricken area, the hapless starvelings being employed on the works at a nominal wage, and housed, clothed, fed free of charge in the camps. The relief work in this case consisted of deepening a large tank or natural lake—which, owing to the protracted drought, had become perfectly dry—and on it were engaged some hundreds of poor people—men, women, and children, all reduced to the last stage of emaciation. The big relief camp close by, built of mat-and-thatch shelters, and capable of accommodating between two and three

thousand souls, was in charge of a Famine Officer, assisted by a medical subordinate and a large staff of European, Eurasian, and native officials. This camp was fairly full at the time, for the majority of refugees were totally incapable of work ; they lay there literally being fed and nursed back to life : some recovered under this fostering treatment ; others—who were too far gone—died, and it was only those declared by the apothecary as fit for it who were sent out on to the works. The tank-digging was a pitiable sight to witness. The rescue operations had but recently been started ; so even those medically passed refugees had not had time to appreciably benefit by the recuperative measures they were now enjoying. The stronger of the skeletonised males languidly chipped the adamantine soil ; others—weaker still—sat by filling the earth into little baskets, and painfully lifting them to the heads of tottering women and children of both sexes—to be taken and emptied on the banks in speechless, lifeless, spiritless procession that made the heart bleed to look at. Even the pick of them—the diggers—had barely stamina enough to wield their implements, while none of the carriers could raise the baskets to their heads unaided. They worked in profound silence, a wolfish glare of starvation still burning in their eyes, their limbs shockingly attenuated, the prominent ribs scarcely concealed by the parchment-like skin. Now, one would have taken it as a foregone conclusion that people reduced to such extremities would have bestowed no thought of gaining money by means of immorality, less so with the relief camp and all its advantages

at their command; but the employés stated that they were pestered day and night by the men offering to procure any number of "subjects" who were prepared to surrender themselves for a few coppers, while the females—walking skeletons with death's-heads wobbling on their fleshless shoulders—would supplement the men's overtures by pushing forward, and with cadaverous, corpse-like blandishments, endeavour to foist themselves on any one who would accept their proffers, which, needless to say, were repelled with disgust. Nevertheless, the poor wretches persisted, and the hideous travesty grew so apace that stern measures had to be adopted for suppressing the nuisance.

The Social Evil—spoken of as that which so easily besets us—is undying in its demands, while the supply of votaries and victims thereof is commensurately inexhaustible: the latter is the outcome of the former—an evolution that will continue either to the end of all time or till the advent of that Regeneration so long looked for. This Evil is Nature's own, and few, indeed, there be who escape its toils, for it is the chief concomitant in the frailty of man, and hangs on to his morality as the bur adheres to his garments. There is no getting away from this pest, no exterminating it, so the only alternative is to bear the incubus with what equanimity we can command, and regard the Evil as—it is sometimes called—a "necessary one."

In India the unfortunates may be divided into two classes—the European, with whom

may be bracketed the Eurasian or half-caste, and the native. Even counting the casual "lady of easy virtue," too frequently to be found among our females of all grades out there, from the gentlewoman down to the veriest drab of a nursemaid gone wrong, the white unfortunate forms a very insignificant minority, located in the largest towns only, with considerable European populations, such as Bombay, Calcutta, and Rangoon, where they are found in force, and in lesser numbers at smaller places. Her native counterpart is in overwhelming predominance everywhere; and as comparisons, though supposed to be odious, are often useful, it may be as well to glance briefly at immoral trafficking of the West in contrast with that of the East, taking London as representative of the one, and Bombay depictive of the other.

Here, in London, where civilisation is strongest, with a religion reputed to be founded on a rock, backed by a high standard of national morality, the inference is that the Evil would spontaneously veil its head, or that the community would compel it to do so. In Bombay such desirable end is achieved to an appreciable extent, and one is almost inclined to think that we are actuated thereto by anxiety to pose in the eyes of the natives as champions of decorum, the more especially when in London the priestesses of the Evil flaunt the streets and assert themselves at almost every hour of the twenty-four with impunity. This is not the case in Bombay; the law there enforces the segregation of the European unfortunate to certain localities,

wherein alone she is at liberty to dwell and practise her vocation—an arrangement by which the statutes, while admitting the inevitability of the Evil, do all that is possible towards circumscribing its sphere of action. Foreign importations of these unfortunates, mainly from south-east Europe, abound in Bombay; they are well known to the police, and not allowed to pervade the city promiscuously; they are compelled to reside in districts set apart for them: they are rarely seen beyond these proscribed limits, while as for open, unabashed solicitation in public—as is permissible in London, even in broad daylight—it is practically unheard of, except in their own *quartier*, and there they are *exigeante* enough. True, a "free lance" may occasionally be encountered outside her particular district, but she never assumes the aggressive, as her London prototype has licence to do. Why not? Because the police would check her if she made the attempt: and this in a country where, according to a fatuous popular belief, we are accredited with a greater leaning towards free-and-easy licentiousness than in Christian England! No; the exotic fallen ones of the West transplanted to the East are kept within a ring fence, as it were; they do not obtrude on the outer world; they do not perambulate the streets in pursuit of custom; they do not self-advertise and solicit as their sisters do in London, and except for such innocuous purposes as shopping, or breathing the sea air, they are seldom if ever seen out of bounds, so that in Bombay it may be said that the Evil,

if not extirpated, has its arena of activity appreciably restricted.

Now, if this can be achieved in an Oriental city like Bombay, with an almost purely indigenous constabulary, and peoples whose ideas on this moot point are not at all in accordance with our own; where Purity Societies, and disciples of the Ormiston Chant School are comparatively few; where evangelical workers—frocked and not frocked, district visitors *et hoc genus omne* are proportionately rare; if, under all these drawbacks, the white unfortunate's cruising-ground can be buoyed off, why cannot a similar demarcation be established in London? Why should our thoroughfares, our places of resort or amusement, be open to the sisterhood to ply the preliminaries of their vocation in, and that, too, under the very noses of a splendidly efficient police? Should a fight be started, a fire break out, an accident happen, an inebriate make a disturbance, a cabby or taxi-man have an altercation with his fare, or an old woman drop a sixpence and commence to howl, a constable promptly appears and does the needful. Should a nuisance—in the ordinary acceptation of the term—be committed, decency by ever so little outstepped, a dog show muzzleless when he ought to be wearing one, a cyclist or motorist exceed the speed limit, the ubiquitous "Bobby" will stop the irregularity, whatever it is. Yet these very helpful myrmidons of the Law are lambs of forbearance towards the Aholahs and Aholibahs of London streets. Why so? Is it that this toleration is bought with

a price? Take a stroll, say, in Regent Street during the afternoon and look on. There are "privateers" in plenty on the side-walks, making most of their allurements, but carefully keeping under way, for, in common with other mortals, they must be on the move. Come later, and you will find the Free Lance to be bolder; she will address you now, or bestow on you a would-be seductive *œillade* in passing; but she will attempt no more. Come later still, say, after the theatre hour, and you will witness a veritable saturnalia. The police are there, but it is evident that the moving-on rule is no longer stringent, for lo! the nymph of the pavement will halt and accost you without hesitation, hook on to your arm, and endeavour to lead you off either to her den in some side street close by, or to a prowling cab, the driver of which has his eye on her tactics, and will hustle up at her beck. A constable is by; he makes no sign; he either thinks the spectacle amusing, or he has grown callous to such scenes. Suppose you are proof to the siren's wiles; you quit; you dive down into the nearest Underground or Tube, with or without a sense of relief, and you flatter yourself that you are free of further importunity of the kind. Not so; behold! you find her on the station platform, where she will range up and start a chat with you. How does she pass the ticket-clipper at the gate? for she is no traveller, and evidently comes there on the chance of finding a customer—after having failed to make a *coup* in the upper world. However, you shake her off; you board your train, and reach your

suburban destination in the small hours. You emerge into the streets, you see figures—the policeman, and some belated roisterers reeling along; but you also see female forms every here and there: who are they? what do they at this uncanny hour, and in such a comparatively quiet neighbourhood? You are not long in doubt; their actions betray their purpose; they are more of them; more unfortunates!

Yes, as Solomon says, you find her everywhere, at all times—this woman, subtle of heart. She may not be particularly "loud"; nay, she may be soft-spoken, and she usually takes the hint to leave you alone quietly enough; but for all that, she is on the cruise, "and with her much fair speech" does her best to induce you to go straightway after her, as "an ox to the slaughter," and that, too, while the agent of the Law looks passively on.

One word more on the subject of London immoral trafficking. The top-hatted, frock-be-coated Indian native student over here, though imbecile enough to convert himself into a guy by abandoning his own picturesque attire for Western fashions, is otherwise shrewd, observant, and intelligent: he takes it all in, and forms his own conclusions: he returns to his father-land, and what does he tell his countrymen about our boasted morality? The question is left for the reader to answer.

The isolated fallen white woman in India occasionally exhibits enterprise and push. Not content with relying on the panders to bring stray patrons to her door, she will take means

of advertising herself. With her name—generally a pseudonym—and address printed on delicately tinted notepaper, she writes seductive invitations, dilating on her personal attractions, hinting at her good health, lamenting her fallen estate, bemoaning the slackness of the times, and ending up with a hope that "the gentleman into whose hands the letter falls will favour her with a visit," etc. etc. She entrusts several of these billets to an agent, with instructions to hurry back to inform her should any of the baits be risen to. Of course, if she is an educated woman—and many of them are—she pens these missives herself, perhaps in pretty, ladylike calligraphy that,—oh, the pity of it!—anterior to her downfall, had indited many an epistle to her erstwhile associates in Society, inviting them to partake of her hospitality. If she is no scholar, she hires some native scribe to write the notes for her. Sometimes she goes a step further: if a cheap photographer is available she will have her portrait taken, and distribute *cartes de visite*, but only to those whom she has reason to believe will respond to her call.

Of the native unfortunates there are several grades: first, the temple *Nautch* or dancing-girl, the aristocracy of the order; second, the *Kuzbeen* or *Theyvuddeeyal*, a superior independent courtesan who commands a high price, and will have no dealings with low caste or outcaste; third, the *Chinal* or *Rundee*, open to all; and fourth, the *Sozurmoothee* or soldier's trull—the last variety to be found only in stations garrisoned by British troops.

The *Nautch* or dancing-girl holds a sort of quasi-religious position; she is attached to a Hindoo temple, and may be said to live in the odour of sanctity: her office is hereditary, the females of her body following in her footsteps, while the males are put to school and have to fight their way in life as any other natives. The temple to which she is linked is more or less endowed with lands or other property: she is listed on the strength of the establishment, and gets all that she wants from the revenues. The temple, moreover, possesses an assortment of feminine jewellery which the *Nautch* girl has the use of on all special occasions. She is supposed to have entered into a spiritual marriage with the temple deity—to whose service she is dedicated—that is, so long as her personal attractions last: when these wane, she is "retired from the active list," so to speak: she is no more called upon to dance before the idol, and ekes out a life of sloth in some purlieu of the temple, where no one takes any notice of her. As long as she retains any pretensions to comeliness she is at the disposal of the *brahmins* or priests, the *pandarums* or officials, the *pujaris* or *coilpullays*, or masters of the temple religious ceremonies; and outsiders, only such as Rajahs and other wealthy folks, who, coming to worship at the shrine, may be captivated by her charms, can obtain possession of her by paying heavily for the privilege. When the alien Christian Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Provincial Commissioner, the District Collector, and Magistrate or other magnate visits the neigh-

bourhood in course of tour, the temple committee propitiate him by giving a *nautch* or dance in his honour. Then the dancing-girl comes to the front. Loaded with the temple jewels, decked in the finest, most diaphanous *sârdi* or cloth, every visible part of her smeared with saffron, her hair interbraided with jessamine or other odoriferous flowers, she presents a picturesque if not alluring figure. As a rule, she is more sensual-looking, more odalisque-like than pretty or handsome, according to Western ideas: she is moonfaced and moonbuilt; her movements are either too phrenetic, more lascivious than graceful, and whatever charm there may be in her person or performance, it is completely and hopelessly annulled by the—to us—hideous discordance of the musical (?) accompaniment which the "orchestra" render tenfold worse by singing at the same time.

The second type of native unfortunate, though not living within a quasi-religious pale—as her sister the *Nautch* girl—holds her own: she occupies a hut in a not overcrowded part of the town, for she shuns the bazaar, leaving that to type number three. Several of them may chum together, in which case each has a tiny cubicle—unlighted, unventilated, and hot as an oven—furnished with a *charpoy* or bedstead, a tripod washstand, and a chair; for she mainly depends on European patrons, who look for these conveniences. When disengaged, she sits on the *pyal* or verandah of her hut facing the road, well in the light of a kerosene wall-lamp, so that she may be discernible to

any chance prowler. Yellow as a guinea with saffron, wearing all her trinkets, a gold-embroidered cloth, a spangled bodice, and hair loaded with flowers, she sits there on the watch, till "some young man, void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner goes the way to her house."

The third type is she who depends either on native customers—too poor for the *Nautch* or temple dancing-girl—or the pander (see above), commissioned to furnish a "subject" for some European. Being indigent, she frequents the crowded bazaars, decked in her best, and though she will not attempt direct solicitation, her appearance or *tout ensemble* sufficiently bespeaks her fallen estate, and the passers-by have no difficulty in accounting for her presence there. She will not, however, hesitate in exchanging a little badinage with any native "dude" who may address her: anyhow, she makes no direct overtures, but when, haply, a pander comes along and engages her, she promptly rises and follows him.

The fourth type, or *Sozurmoothee*, is a hardy, brazen wanton; her intimacy with the men of successive British regiments that have been garrisoning the place during her time has converted her into a sturdy virago of the most pronounced description. She does not bestow much thought on her toilet or adornment, for the reason that her clientele are not very particular about the former, while an addiction to drink and gambling—both picked up from the soldiers—militates against investing her earn-

ings in jewels and finery. She can speak English after a fashion, has all our barrack-square expletives by heart, and in many cases has learnt something of boxing and wrestling, acquirements that stand her in good stead when some intoxicated "Tommy" attempts to ill-treat her. She is by no means continent or fastidious: if some moonstruck soldier thinks he secures her for his own, he is much mistaken, for she considers herself the common property of the whole battalion—from the colour-sergeants, who pay her in rupees, down to the youngest recruit, from whom she may receive a few coppers. Besides the "Soldier Vocabulary," she learns the more popular barrack songs, and at night, as she wends her way home in groups after "business," she may be heard trolling out snatches of such gems as "Sammy," "Yip-ay-addy-ay-yeh," "Ta-ra-ra-boom-deyah," "Never let your donah go upon the Stage," and so on.

CHAPTER XIX

TRUMPED-UP EVIDENCE—FALSE WITNESSING—PERJURY

THE Anglo-Indian outsider, if of observant bent and sufficiently familiar with the languages, can satisfy himself that a good deal of wrong-doing of the description set forth in the headline is carried on in India, especially if duty takes him to places remote from the district centres, beyond the range of European supervision; or, in the words of a humble imitator of Aliph Cheem, the immortal creator of *Lays of Ind*—

> "Ah, they know not at headquarters
> What's going on outside,
> How slackly our natives
> By laws of truth abide.
> If only those who blindly trust
> The 'mild Hindoo' and others,
> Would drop upon them now and then
> They'd gauge our Indian 'Brothers.'"

Say a case of assault and battery is to be tried before the brahmin Sub-Magistrate of a *Taluk* village, far removed from any cantonment or station and its European judicial civilian officers. All are natives—the Sub-Magistrate, the complainant, defendant, the pleaders or counsel, witnesses for both sides, the village

headmen, and the police—most of them Hindoos of various sects, from brahmins downwards, with an occasional Moslem here and there. The litigants are in fair circumstances—petty *zemindars* or landowners—who, for convenience' sake, will be named Narayen, the complainant, and Anund, the defendant. As soon as Narayen has lodged his information, and Anund received his summons, the first thing to do is to engage counsel in the persons of two local brahmin pleaders or lawyers; and the first thing the pleaders do is to make their clients understand that their fees are so much, and that before breaking ground they must be paid a portion thereof on account. These important preliminaries having been satisfactorily arranged, the lawyers busy themselves in seeking out witnesses, and getting matters in order against the day of trial. Their principals are not supposed to take any further action; they remain quiescent; they have agreed to pay counsel for fighting the case, and to counsel they are content to leave all the details. It sometimes happens that the opposing pleaders in an action compound with each other, and share the clubbed fees equally between them, leaving the issue to take care of itself, to go by the board, so to speak. But if there should be no such coalition, and the matter is to be regularly fought out, they individually set to work after the witnesses. The action is based on the following: Narayen and Anund—after a hard day's labour in superintending the cutting of crops in the fields—meet that evening at the village arrack-shop, where,

imbibing a little too freely — especially the latter named—commenced an argument which, growing hotter, at last culminated in Anund rushing at Narayen and striking him across the head with a stick. Narayen was on the point of retaliating when the arrack-shopkeeper threw himself between the angry men, and threatened to send for the police if the disturbance did not cease, and that if Narayen—the assaulted—chose to appeal to the law, he could count on him—the shopkeeper—as a witness on his behalf. There were other people refreshing themselves at the den when the fracas occurred, who all happened to be tenants—some of Narayen, some of Anund, and who would very probably have taken active sides in the dispute had it been allowed to develop.

No sooner did the suit appear among the cases posted on the board outside the Sub-Magistrate's court, than Narayen's advocate, losing no time, as he thought, went to interview the arrack-shopkeeper with a view to ascertain the weight of his testimony. The man said that, having heard every word of the altercation, he was of opinion that the assault was entirely unprovoked and unjustifiable, that Narayen—much the more sober of the two—had said or done nothing sufficiently provocative to Anund as to call for the attack, that the latter was badly intoxicated, and had been the first to open the brawl by striking Narayen with the stick. True, the latter was on the eve of paying back the blow, but on the shopkeeper's interference he at once desisted from con-

tinuing the quarrel. Learning this, the pleader nominated the liquor-vender as the principal witness for the prosecution, promised a reward, cautioned him against probable attempts being made to seduce him to the other side, and then went his way to see the others who had been present during the dispute. First, going to Narayen's tenants, the pleader sounded the men, and, to his surprise, found them reluctant to testify on their master's behalf: no argument or persuasion on the pleader's part could shake them; so he left them in high dudgeon—to seek out those of Anund's faction who had been at the arrack-shop that evening: to these he passed himself off as acting for Anund; but, to his added astonishment, Anund's tenants expressed the same unwillingness to say a word that would assist their landlord's case. The pleader returned home, completely baffled as far as the tenants were concerned, though comforted in the assurance of having secured the arrack-shopkeeper's promised support.

When the case came on for hearing, and Narayen's pleader confidently called up the arrack-vender as witness, the lawyer's feelings can be imagined when the fellow averred his entire ignorance of what happened on the occasion! This was disconcerting enough, but more startling developments followed, for when Anund's tenants, on being called in further support of the defence, they all swore that Anund—their landlord—was wholly to blame; and then, when Narayen's men were asked to speak for the prosecution, they stoutly asserted that Anund

was not in fault, and that all the onus lay with Narayen, their own landlord! This produced a deadlock, and eventually the case was dismissed for lack of reliable evidence. It subsequently leaked out that Narayen and Anund—personally and unknown to their respective counsel—had secretly visited each other's tenants, bribed them with hard cash to testify against their respective landlords, and solemnly promised to allot them lands should they lose their present holdings; that both principals—unknown to each other—had seen the liquor-vender; and as both had given him the same bribe, he decided to keep the gifts, and deserve them by *not* speaking for either side. When Narayen's pleader upbraided the fellow for breach of faith, he retorted by saying that money down was better than money promised.

In India, by means of judicious bribing, trumped-up evidence is easily procurable; that is to say, if the parties so approached are sufficiently venal and dishonourable as to rise to the bait. The police, however, through the medium of threats and brow-beating, generally succeed in finding some one prepared to give false witness, though it does not follow that the guardians of the law are aware of the spuriousness of such information: so long as they can produce witnesses in furtherance of a case they may have on hand, it is practically immaterial to them whether—in absence of proof—the testimony be true or false.

A lady in the Central Provinces possessed a quantity of really valuable jewellery, which,

contrary to the oft-repeated advice of her husband, she kept in a brass-bound mahogany jewel-case, not in any secure receptacle, but standing on her toilet-table. She never troubled her head about the safety of that box, for her husband being adjutant of his regiment, there were always a number of sepoys at the house, both night and day, besides the usual crowd of domestic servants, who all slept on the premises. Rising one morning, the lady, to her consternation, noticed her jewel-case missing. Immediately there ensued a great outcry; the officer at once wrote to the police station reporting the robbery, and requesting that the necessary steps be taken. The Police Inspector—a native—came hurrying to the house with a party of men, two of whom he posted at the gate with orders to allow no one to pass out. Then he and the others viewed the room from which the jewel-case had been abstracted, examined the approaches thereto, and after a lengthy deliberation with his constables, the Inspector gave it as his opinion that the thief had entered the room and gone out with his booty by a ventilator high up the adjoining bathroom wall, for, on examining the latter apartment, he noticed sundry scratches on that wall such as would be produced by the naked foot of a man in the act of reaching the ventilator. Keeping his own counsel, the Inspector next requested the officer to assemble his whole household—excluding the sepoys, who, of course, were above suspicion. When they had all mustered, the policeman sternly interrogated each individual as to his or her know-

A DEHLIWAL BAURIAH 'KAMAOO' ON THE MOVE.

ledge of the robbery: they all expressed their utter ignorance, and bore the ordeal without flinching, except the cowman, who showed signs of nervousness. Pretending not to have noticed this, the Inspector, after a short pause, continued, "Now, listen; this is a serious matter for the whole body of you, and if we do not get to the bottom of it here, I shall have to take you all to the lock-up, and keep you there till you confess. Some one of you is the thief, or some one of you must be able to throw such light on the matter as will enable me to find out the actual robber. There are the tell-tale marks on the bathroom wall, and it is nonsense to say that a man could climb in and climb out of the ventilator which faces your outhouses—and you all sleeping in the verandahs—without one of you at least having seen the thief. Come—confess!"

The servants reiterated their denials: they now began to regard each other suspiciously, and urged whoever knew anything about the matter to come forward and tell. Presently, the cowman, with much trepidation and tears in his eyes, stated that about one o'clock that morning, as he went to the cowshed to replenish the fodder, he plainly saw in the moonlight a man carrying something stealthily descend from that ventilator and make his way to the gate; but he was too frightened to challenge the person, thinking that it might be a ghost, and not dreaming him to be a robber. Now, however, that a theft had been committed, he deemed it his duty to state what he had seen. Asked to

describe the skulker, the cowman, after a deal of hesitation, said he looked like a sepoy in plain clothes. Asked why he thought it was a sepoy, he replied he judged so from the man's walk—a conclusion possible, nay, probable, for the native who has passed through the drill sergeant's hands differs in carriage and gait from other natives as much as a Grenadier Guardsman differs from a Whitechapel rough. At this, the Inspector inquired of the cowman whether he would be able to identify the thief if confronted with him : he readily expressed his ability to do so, whereupon the policeman, secretly exulting in the successful turn affairs were taking, requested the officer to summon every sepoy who had slept at the house that night. The soldiers were called ; they came in a body, and the cowman pointing out one, denounced him as the culprit. Before the astonished sepoy could utter a word of protest the Inspector demanded of the cowman how he identified the individual. "By his red chintze trousers and short white jacket," answered the fellow, indicating the sepoy's garments. "I saw them plainly in the moonlight." True, he was the only one of the group who was thus attired.

"Will you swear to it before the magistrate ?" was the Inspector's next question.

"Yes !"

"Then, sir," said the policeman to the officer, "I shall have to take the sepoy into custody, and keep him there till the case is disposed of."

"No, you will not," rejoined the English-

man, breaking into a hearty laugh; "if any, it will be my lying scoundrel of a cowman. That sepoy bears an unimpeachable character, and I can answer for him—in the present case at least." Saying which, he took a chair, placed it against the high wardrobe, mounted, and dropped back again—with the missing jewel-case!

"There, Lotty!" he cried to his dumbfounded and overjoyed wife; "I have played you this trick—to show how easily the case can really be stolen. Last night, when I came home from mess, and found you asleep in bed, the idea struck me—to give you not merely a good lesson, but a regular fright; so I removed the box from under your very nose and hid it up there. The rest is all a part of the play. I made the scratches on the bathroom wall."

Most things in this life must be paid for, even if you indulge in a joke—with a moral attached thereto. A *douceur* of ten rupees to the crestfallen Inspector, and a similar amount for distribution among the constables compensated them for having thus been hoaxed: the sepoys were immensely relieved, especially he of the red trousers, and so the matter ended happily for all concerned. Before the gathering broke up, the wretched cowman was asked how he could bring himself to bear false witness against a man for implication in a crime that had never been committed; how he could concoct such a tissue of untruths.

"My lord," whined the trembling rascal, addressing his master, "I did so merely to shield myself and fellow-servants: I thought that a

robbery had actually taken place, and knew that we would be the first to be suspected; so, to divert suspicion from us, I accused the sepoy."

The above is an instance of how, under terrorisation of the police, a native, on the impulse of the moment, and without the shadow of cause, will bear false witness against his neighbour.

F——, a former jailer, describes an instance of persistent perjury. Paliem, a pariah convict and an incorrigible character, was for a long term of imprisonment in F——'s jail, on account of a series of robberies. One day, while the man was undergoing solitary confinement for breaking some jail rule, he reported sick, so was taken to the jail hospital for the medical officer to see. When questioned as to his sickness, Paliem exhibited some very angry-looking wounds on his arm, which he swore had been given him the night before by F——, the jailer, with a stick. This statement the surgeon did not believe, for he at once saw that the cuts were too clean to have been caused by a blunt instrument such as a stick: they must have been made with something edged, and were, moreover, several days old. The doctor summoned F——, who at once indignantly denied the prisoner's accusation; and then, on searching Paliem's cell, they found a piece of glass bottle—secreted on the ledge of the high window. On making this discovery, the doctor opined that the prisoner must have picked up the glass outside while at work somewhere, and used it in self-inflicting the cuts. The case was reported to the superintendent,

who, being far too much inclined to leniency, let the fellow off with a caution. Not surprising, therefore, that, soon after this, Paliem preferred another complaint, pointing to a gash under his chin, and accusing the European warder of entering his cell at night and attempting to cut his throat with a piece of glass, and to substantiate the statement he asked the jail people to search in front of his cell, when they very probably would find that piece of glass; also to question a certain ward-servant, who would testify to having seen the warder in his—Paliem's—cell, and heard his screams. True enough, a bit of bloodstained glass was discovered; the ward-servant was sent for and questioned, but so far from upholding Paliem's statement, he swore he saw nothing, heard nothing, while as for the European warder, he fully exculpated himself of the charge. The prisoner was tried for making this lying accusation against the warder; also for endeavouring to suborn the ward-servant as a false witness, in punishment for which his running sentence was extended some months. Paliem hated Europeans, and soon brought another charge against F——, the jailer. Being a dangerous fellow, Paliem, with several others equally bad, were locked up during the night in solitary cells on the ground-floor of the European ward. One night, while thus confined, Paliem startled the whole jail by loud screams, and brought the warders running to his cell. When asked the reason of his cries, he said that F——, the jailer, had entered his cell with a lantern, and had

given him a beating, in proof of which he showed several fresh, bleeding wounds. It just happened that F—— that night was absent on casual leave, and it could not have been his *locum tenens* who had committed the assault, for Paliem, in his complaint, had referred to the jailer by name. Thus the accusation was clearly proved to be false, and again was a piece of bloodstained glass found hidden in Paliem's cell, which conclusively showed that he had once more mutilated himself. This time the villain was well flogged, which had the wholesome effect of preventing him from making any more such false charges.

CHAPTER XX

MALPRACTICES WITH CERTIFICATES OR TESTIMONIALS AND EXAMINATION PAPERS

It is customary throughout India for the European employer to grant a certificate—more commonly called "character" in the south, and "chittee" in the north—to the domestic servant on discharging him, or he resigns of his own free will; in either case, that is, if the man has been guiltless of any grave offence during his term of service, be it ten years or ten days. Mendacity, of course, does not count against him, for that is a part of his nature; and any comparative triviality—such as the hue of his skin, the shape of his turban, might just as well influence you into giving him an unfavourable testimonial as the fact of his innate propensity for lying. These certificates are highly prized by the *nokur* or *valaykurran* (servant); they are warrants for his worth in the past, and stepping-stones for his advancement in the future. He carefully hoards them either in a tin case or a pocket-book, and with great pride exhibits them to a prospective employer. Unarmed with one or more of these credentials, no domestic—unless very young, and commencing at the foot of the ladder as a dog-boy—can hope for success, however

favourable his appearance, however pleasing his manner and diction, for when engaging a new servant, the first call from *Sahib* or *Mem-Sahib* (gentleman or lady) is, "Show your characters." These characters are sufficient criteria for the Anglo-Indian of any experience to go upon, especially if he has been doing duty in one place, —district, province, or even presidency—for a length of time; because it generally happens that he knows or has heard of the writers of those vouchers, and a reference—if necessary —is easily made.

Now, when a domestic servant dies, what becomes of the testimonials he may have gained during his lifetime? There is no such thing as sentiment in the native; so it is not the least likely that the widow or other surviving relatives would preserve the vouchers in memory of the departed; nor would these relics be of any use to deceased's sons, for the dates would interfere with turning them to their own account. What, then, becomes of the dead man's chits? Here is an answer to the question. To the author's own knowledge there exists in one large civil and military station—and there is no reason why other stations of any size should not be similarly provided—a cunning old rogue living in a secluded part of the native town who conducts a sort of "Servants' Certificate Exchange Bureau." He goes by the name, let us say, of Appow Pillay, a *ci-devant* English clerk, well up in that language, and who had once held good subordinate appointments, but on account of a marvellous gift of imitating other people's writing,

was dismissed from his last post for forgery—a false step that damned his prospects of ever obtaining respectable employment again. But he must live; so, on coming out of jail, he started as a copyist, at a time when typewriters, duplicators, etc. were yet in the womb of futurity. He gathered a clientele about him; for overworked correspondence clerks unable to finish off by closing hour, paid no overtime, and yet obliged to have certain letters ready against office opening on the morrow, would smuggle out the rough drafts and blank letter forms in their pockets, take them to Appow Pillay, who, for a small fee, would sit up all night if necessary, and have the work ready by the time the clerks called in the morning. This went on till some one in Appow Pillay's late office detected that individual's handwriting—disguised though it was—in one of the letters: it got to the ears of the principals in power, who at once gave strict orders that the practice was to cease, under pain of summary dismissal. So, on that source of livelihood being lost to him, Appow Pillay inaugurated his present venture, and gains a comfortable income thereby, for his constituency—though now menial—brings him in more money than his former clerical customers. He himself and his method of business—more properly termed "tricks of the trade"—are well-known to the servantry of the station; so when a member thereof dies, the surviving relatives take the defunct's characters to Appow Pillay, who buys them, paying according to their eligibility for future use, and by this means he has made a large collection of these

credentials, not only through death of the holders, be it said; because often, when a man is out of work and hard pushed, he surrenders his chits to Appow Pillay for cash, who will hire them to the owners should occasion require, but will not sell them back to him again.

Say you are in want of a table-boy: the news reaches the *parcherry* or servants' quarter, and you are waited on by candidates for the post. Among those who present themselves, you are taken by the looks of one lad; but, unfortunately, he possesses only a single testimonial, and that, too, over the signature of some one you do not know and never heard of. It reads:—

"The bearer, Coopooswamy, has been our table-servant for seven months, during which time he gave us satisfaction. He is clean, intelligent, and sober, though, of course, we have caught him fibbing. He understands the cleaning of guns and bicycles, and, accompanied by the *ayah*, can be entrusted with wheeling a child's perambulator. His services are dispensed with, as we are going home. M—— T——-S——."

"How long have you been out in service?" you ask.

"Two, tree (three) years, sar. When my pather (father) die I doing work."

"Well, I do not care to engage a boy who has been working two or three years, and can show no more than one character for only seven months, so you can go."

For a moment he appears perplexed, then says eagerly, "Please, sar, I got more karrikitur (characters); my brother keeping in his house.

Master please givee liew (give me leave), I go bring."

You are a gunner, you are a cyclist, though you have no use for a child's perambulator. The chits of the other applicants make no mention of gun- and cycle-cleaning; so you tell the fellow to fetch his other chits. Now, follow him. The "brother" is as mythical as the "more karrikitur." He goes straight to Appow Pillay, states the case, and asks that individual to fit him out with a couple of testimonials.

"Four annas each—mind!" prefaces Appow Pillay.

"Very well," replies Coopooswamy, throwing down a half-rupee.

Appow Pillay hereupon asks to have a look at Coopooswamy's solitary certificate; he reads it, and after going through his stock, says, "I have none with the name 'Coopooswamy'; but here are two with 'Abraham' on them."

"They won't do," snaps the client.

"Yes, they will. They are dated separately—prior to this one from Mrs. T——-S——: the descriptions also suit you; so if the gentleman you want to take service with notices the difference in the names, all you have to do is to say that you were a Roman Catholic convert at the time these two I give you refer to, but finding yourself no better for being a Christian, you became a heathen pariah again, and took your father's name—'Coopooswamy.' See here, this is from Mr. B——, and this one from Captain M——. Be careful to remember the names: do you understand?"

The lad understands, takes the two additional testimonials, hastens back, and presents them for your perusal. The first reads :—

"The bearer of this, a tall, bright, intelligent-looking native Roman Catholic convert named Abraham, served me for nearly a year here and up-country as dressing-boy. He gave me every satisfaction, and knows his work thoroughly. I am sorry to part with him, but he does not like the idea of accompanying me to Bengal, where I am going on transfer.

"L—— F—— B——;
"Govt. Telghs."

And the second :—

"Abraham, a lanky, nice-looking young fellow, the bearer of this, served for a few weeks as stopgap waiter in this Mess. He behaved well, and showed that he has the making of a good head servant in him.

"T—— M——, Capt.,
"Mess Secretary,
"99th Coromandel Infantry."

You compare dates of all three, and find them in sequence. It happens that you have met both B—— and M——. You know B—— to have a cast in his left eye, while M—— is one of the tallest men in the Indian Army. But what at once arouses your suspicion is the difference of the names in the characters.

"How is it you are called 'Abraham' in the two earlier certificates, and 'Coopooswamy' in the third?" you demand.

"Bepore (before) I Christian peller (fellow), sar. I not liking: not getting more rice prom (from) Christian God; therepore (therefore) only I 'coming pariah again."

Be that as it might, you want to make sure of your man ere closing with him, so you inquire, "Did you like serving Mr. B——?" remembering a penchant that gentleman has for "kicking niggers."

"Oh yes, sar; he very kind master to me."

"Had not Mr. B—— a cast in his left eye?" you ask casually: then, seeing that the "boy" does not comprehend, you fall back on the vernacular and add, "Was he not *koorroottoo kunnoo* in the left eye?"

"No, sar!" exclaims the fellow, as if resenting such an insinuation against his former "kind master"; "that gentleman got ishtraight (straight) eye, sar."

A lie! You give him a glance that could kill; he notices it, and you proceed, "Hum; well, this other gentleman, Captain M——, he is very short, isn't he?"

"Yes, sar," agrees Coopooswamy, evidently thinking it would be impolitic to traverse your remarks again; "he ismall (small, short) like that," holding his hand about five foot nothing from the ground.

Another lie! That is quite enough; he stands convicted: you return the three papers to "Coopooswamy," alias "Abraham," and, pointing to the gates, sternly bid him begone.

Occasionally a certificate is presented—couched in such laboriously grandiloquent terms

of eulogy on the bearer as to carry falsehood on the face of it. The paper, though passable enough as regards calligraphy and orthography, is crudely composed, and teems with cullings from the dictionary, evidently put together by some ignorant, semi-educated native scribe, and palmed off on some equally ignorant domestic—for a consideration, of course—as just the sort of voucher that would take the fancy of the Englishman, whereas the Englishman of average intelligence at once detects the fraud, and treats it accordingly.

Examination papers are open to attack. As the examination time draws near, the more unprincipled, more backward among the native candidates-to-be craftily approach those members of the school or college or departmental staff whom they know to have been employed in preparing the examination paper drafts for the printers. These—generally one or two native clerks or under masters, supposed to be trustworthy—anticipating some such application on the part of unprincipled alumni, and seeing a way of making money, take care to surreptitiously provide themselves with copies of the questions, which they sell for no small sum to the interested parties. Should the transcribing clerks be honest men and unnegotiable, the rascally students try the printers, and bribe one of the machine-men to secrete copies while striking-off, and which change hands for anything between five and fifty rupees, according to the importance of the examination, the nature of the subject, and the pockets of the bribers.

The Indian papers frequently expose instances of this description of criminality.

W——, a telegraph officer, had a unique experience in connection with examinations. During the earlier years of his service a new rule was made ordering all telegraph signallers to undergo an examination in ordinary educational subjects, and intimating that those who passed would receive promotion, while those who failed would either be reduced or remain where they were. When this order first came into operation, only one set of papers was issued to each executive telegraph officer, who, travelling from office to office in his subdivision, held the examinations, using the same set of questions, and posting the results to headquarters for final adjudgment. W—— having completed the examination at X office, his starting-point, proceeded to the next office at Y, forty-eight miles distant, inspecting the line *en route* by diurnal stages of twelve miles; so he would be due at Y on the fourth day. While out on his range, W—— would often attach on his portable Morse sounder to the wire, for the purpose of ascertaining the state of communication on both sides of him, or giving any orders that might be necessary. This "attaching on" did not materially affect the "through" current, which, moreover, could always be adjusted for variation by the "relays" in the offices; and so long as W—— did not depress his "transmitting key" he did not interrupt, and could read all that was going on without any one being a bit the wiser. On the occasion in question, at the camping

ground half-way between X and Y offices, W—— attached on, and imagine his surprise when he heard the tail end of the examination questions on English and Indian history signalled through, followed by those for geography and arithmetic! Then, when they had finished, the sender and receiver interchanged initials, whereby W—— recognised them to be two native signallers, one at X, the other at Y. Realising the object of their plot, W—— resolved to counterplot. He had dictated the papers to the X staff, which one of them had just been signalling to a friend of his at Y, who would doubtless allow his fellow-telegraphists to see them, and prepare themselves accordingly. W—— made no sign; he promptly unattached, went to his tent, took out those examination papers from his dispatch-box, and so materially altered the questions as to practically convert them into an entirely new set, thus defeating the aim of the schemers. The Y men, who had had time to "mug up" the answers, were astounded when the examiner read out the papers: many of the men failed dismally, and when W——, in submitting the papers with the altered questions, explained his reasons for taking that liberty, he was heartily commended. All examinations were immediately suspended; those that had been held were cancelled, and new sets of questions, not for each subdivision, but for each office, were prepared and distributed.

CHAPTER XXI

ANONYMOUS LETTERS

We look on anonymous letter-writing as the *ne plus ultra* of cowardly, treacherous rascality: the native does not: he considers it all fair and above-board; quite within the day's work, and a safe method of dealing a blow without being hit in return. Not that certain grades of Britons are by any means free of the dishonourable practice of anonymous letter-writing. Such missives that our unsuspecting Post Office delivers to private individuals, heads of Government departments, or principals of commercial firms are probably proportionately as numerous here as out yonder, for we have Englishmen of the baser sort among us who are equally vindictive and malicious as the natives of India, and who do not hesitate to stoop to this despicable method of harming, insulting, or otherwise maltreating those against whom they entertain a grudge—real or fancied. But enough of ourselves; we are dealing with Asiatics, not Europeans.

Say you are a man set under authority out there, and perhaps, not having a hundred soldiers at your beck and call to order about—like the Centurion of old—you hold sway over a small army of civilian natives and several

European assistant officers. Well, one of the latter discovers a particularly promising *oomedwâr* hanging on to his office establishment. Parenthetically, let it be explained, for the behoof of those unfamiliar with Anglo-Indian terms, that *oomedwâr* literally means "one who hopes," or, coining the word, "a hoper," *i.e.* any one who gives his services gratuitously as a subordinate on the clerical or field staff, in the expectation of succeeding to a permanent paid berth either when a vacancy occurs, or, irrespective of such contingency, he renders himself so useful as to induce his superior to get him appointed to the paid establishment in consideration of the same.

In this case, your assistant's name is Robinson; the *oomedwâr's* Ramaswamy. Well, Robinson writes to you demi-officially in favour of Ramaswamy. You know Robinson to be a good man, whose recommendation deserves respect; so, in answer, you tell him to take Ramaswamy on a month's probation, at the expiry of which time, if he gives satisfaction, you will put the man in orders. Robinson imparts the good news to Ramaswamy, which, while it gladdens that individual, ruffles some one else in Robinson's office, for, in a few days, you receive a letter—unsigned, undated, written evidently in a feigned hand, and bearing only the local postmark, which shows that it has been sent under cover to some friend in the place. The communication is to the following effect, (the "barbarisms" in the language are ordinary, everyday crudities of Indo-English):—

"HONOURED SIR,—After wishing many respectful compliments for you, I do risk to point out that as Executive Officer of the Circle, it is bound duty of you to keep eye on European as well native subordinates, and prevent them to the favouritism. Small bird whispers that Robinson Esquire has yielded to force of the money bribe presented by wretch Ramaswamy, and has hoodwinked your honour's visions to promise him berth, when high more deserving fellows who have been volunteer working in Robinson Esquire's office as long as blackguard Ramaswamy, shall whistle for appointment, because they are poor men, and not supplied with good circumstance relatives same as Ramaswamy. Please your honour's grace to annul gross nepotism instance."

Robinson's headquarters are within three hours' run of you: you decide to go there—with the double purpose of ascertaining the real truth of the matter, and endeavouring to trace the author of the above libellous production. You suspect that the letter emanates either from one of Robinson's permanent clerks—with a relative among the *oomedwârs*, or from one of those "hopefuls"—both jealous of Ramaswamy's preferment. First, though, to find out which of them up there have friends at your station, who must have received the letter in the first instance under cover, and locally posted it. Without showing the missive to any one you casually interrogate your own clerks on the subject; but they cannot or will not help you: the police would be of no use in a case of this kind, so the next day you go up by the morning

train and take Robinson by surprise. You show him the letter—privately: after perusing and calling it a "pack of d——d lies" he scrutinises the calligraphy, and affirms that it is not the handwriting of any one of his permanent staff: the culprit then must be an outsider, perhaps one of the *oomedwârs*. You muster the lot, tell them to take places at the desks: Robinson distributes paper, and before they well know where they are, you read them out a short piece of dictation, which, when done, you gather up, and with Robinson retire to his sanctum—to compare the several specimens of writing with that of the anonymous letter. For a long time you two sit, poring over those sheets and that letter in vain, trying to detect any similarity in the writing; and you are about giving up the task as hopeless, when, suddenly, in one of the dictated bits you notice that the final upstrokes of the "y's" do not form a loop, but are "q"-shaped. This peculiarity does not manifest itself in any of the other papers, but is very evident in the anonymous letter. You make no fuss: these sort of things are best settled quietly: you instruct Robinson's head clerk to give such-and-such an *oomedwâr* his *congé*, and for reasons you deem it unnecessary to dilate on, he is never to be allowed admission into the office again.

The serious consequences of losing one's temper with a native servant were dramatically exemplified when the handsome Mrs. M—— laid her whip across her *syce's* (groom or horsekeeper) shoulders for permitting her horse to rub himself

against the verandah post of a shop, and thus damage her new English saddle, while the lady herself was busy inside. Mrs. M——, besides being beautiful and irascible, was flirtatiously, nay, erotically inclined, and, unfortunately for her, that horsekeeper (they follow on foot at your heels out there) had made a third at meetings between his mistress and her *cher ami* for the time—occasions whereon she would ride to some secluded rendezvous, where the gentleman would meet her, lift her down, and the two stroll off together, leaving the groom in charge of her horse. These assignations always took place late in the evening, just before dinner-time, when every one would be at the band, the club, or at the tennis courts. Well, the *syce* was not going to submit to a thrashing without giving a *quid pro quo*, or obtaining satisfaction of some description. He was not a desperate character, otherwise he might have retaliated on his mistress direct; and being somewhat timid to boot, he did not relish the idea of going straight to his master and informing him of the *Mem-Sahib's* (lady's) doings; he feared receiving another castigation, so he applies to a bazaar scribe, and for four annas gets him to write an anonymous letter to M——, advising him to follow his wife the next time she rides out alone in the evening. For some days M—— had entertained misgivings about her; certain little peculiarities in her manner and her appearance and so forth had been troubling him, and now, his suspicions aroused, he overcame his repugnance of the means by which they had been

awakened : he acted on the suggestion contained in the letter, and caught the erring couple *in flagranti delicto*. Divorce proceedings resulted ; the disgraced wife went home to her people ; while, as for Mr. M——, in the first flush of his outraged feelings he did everything he could to trace the author of that anonymous letter, which had enabled him to rid himself of so undesirable a partner. He told the police ; he employed a crier to publish in the bazaars and native dwelling-quarters that if the originator of the letter came forward, he had nothing to fear, that, on the contrary, he would be rewarded. The horsekeeper and the scribe of course heard the tempting announcement, but the former, never dreaming that his letter of warning would have brought about such sensational results, and the latter deeming the proclamation to be a trap, both decided to hold their peace. Time fled ; that *syce* continued in M——'s service ; and in due course he began to turn the matter over in his mind : after all, there might be no trap—as the scribe suspected : after all, what risk did he run in revealing himself ? Nay, instead of receiving the dreaded punishment, very possibly—with reflection—his master's feelings of gratitude may have intensified during the interval, and the promised reward might be commensurately greater ; so, taking the opportunity when M—— was down at the stables looking at his horses, the *syce* spoke out. The man had reckoned without his host—as he found to his cost. M——'s feelings had undergone a revulsion—all in favour of his

discarded wife ; in fact, he yearned to reinstate her in his house, and had already commenced taking steps towards that object. The consequences were that the *syce* had barely uttered the words ere M—— fell upon the wretch and half-killed him.

O'K—— was lay trustee of the cantonment church. The term "Lay Trustee" is presumably Anglo-Indian, for it is not listed in the English dictionary, which shows "Sidesman" as the nearest approach. Anyhow, O'K—— was a man of good report ; quiet, steady, of a congenial disposition, and gifted with a particularly fine voice, which people would insist on calling into requisition at social gatherings where there was music — vocal and instrumental. Everybody thought well of O'K——, especially the chaplain, who regarded him as the pattern of propriety, and treated him as his right-hand man in all parochial or other church matters. Officially, O'K—— had something to do with the Municipality ; and once, in conjunction with the Civil Surgeon or Health Officer, he had to order the closing of an unauthorised slaughter-house for goats in a crowded part of the native town—a measure which roused the animosity of the proprietors against him. They knew of O'K——'s good name, so resolved—through it—to injure the man ; the more so as they were also aware that the *Padre Sahib* (chaplain) entertained the highest opinion of him. Consequently, the goat butchers deputed a sharp member of their community to keep a strict watch over O'K——, and report if he did anything not in accordance with his almost

saintly reputation. The spy had not long to wait. Ascertaining one night that O'K—— was dining at the infantry mess, the watcher went there and hung about outside, commanding a full view of the interior. After dinner, and when the band had finished their programme, the party started singing, and O'K—— was in great request. He gave them several songs, all with rattling choruses, in which many joined lustily. Of course "drinks" were going at the same time; so, when the assembly broke up, the spy went home and reported all that he had seen and heard, vowing that O'K—— was equally intoxicated with the rest, or he would not have made such a noise. What was the result? With a refinement of malice, the reptiles sent an anonymous letter to the chaplain, pointing out that Mr. O'K——, the man in whom he placed such faith, was immoral, a drunkard; that the night previous he had been intoxicated at the mess, where he must have sung obscene songs, judging from the uproar and laughter they created. His Reverence, incredulous, though rather scandalised, showed the letter to O'K——, whereupon, at the latter's suggestion, they drove round to the mess-house, where they found several of the officers with whom O'K—— had dined the night before. They indignantly repudiated the aspersions against O'K—— contained in that letter, and with one accord all went and placed the matter in the hands of the police. After some difficulty the police discovered the culprits, and these, brought before the Cantonment Magistrate,

were convicted of the slander and severely punished.

In all organisations — military, civil, commercial, or private—the anonymous letter-writer is sure to appear. If a native regimental officer, struck by the superior intelligence of a sepoy, takes the man in hand with a view of helping him to qualify for special promotion, the Commanding Officer receives an unsigned letter, accusing the officer in question of favouritism, or even worse. If, say, a telegraph superintendent, desirous of showing himself economical in the expenditure of public funds by saving money on an estimate sanctioned for a certain amount, entrusts the working out of that estimate to a man in whom he has confidence, immediately the other men become envious, and send in an anonymous letter to the Circle Head of the department, accusing Superintendent So-and-so and Subordinate Such-a-one of colluding to make money out of the grant, and in which they will go shares. If an English liquor-merchant suddenly advertises a cheaper brand of spirit—procured from home in the wood and bottled locally, thus accounting for its low price—some discontented employé—to pay the merchant out—sends anonymous letters to the hotels and other large consumers, stating that the advertised spirit did not come out from home ; that it is the remains of an old unsaleable stock, doctored up with arrack or similar abomination, and is being palmed off on the gullible public as something quite new. A notable instance of this kind recently happened in Calcutta, known by the name of " The Potato Whisky Case " : the accused

parties in which, however, were able to clear themselves. Should a member of a European family show any particular kindness to one domestic, heap favours on him, give him money over and above his pay to buy himself clothes, etc., the master of the house is sure to get an unsigned letter complaining of undue preference, and painting the recipient thereof in colours blacker than those usually employed in depicting the Father of Lies himself.

CHAPTER XXII

CONFLAGRATIONS, THE RESULT OF ARSON OR INCENDIARISM

THE venue of the greater part of this chapter is not placed at any of the larger civil and military centres—served by a railway, and furnished with the more up-to-date appliances for dealing with conflagrations of whatever nature or source, and where the Arsonite or Incendiary would find it a matter of well-nigh impossibility to ply his diabolical vocation, because of the many eyes that would be upon him. In a big cantonment, the number of troops, both native and European, the large body of civil police, the native portions of the town plentifully sprinkled with sepoy reservists, sepoy pensioners, and the English residents in the place all tend to handicap the Incendiary and keep him inactive, while, should a fire break out, the authorities have ample means and men at their disposal for coping with it. The locale, therefore, is a small, isolated up-country station, garrisoned by a single native regiment, with but a handful of our people—military and civil—thrown in.

During the intensely dry, burning Indian summer on the plains, where everything exposed for months together to the influence of a powerful,

pitiless sun is parched and withered to the consistency of touchwood, and the earth itself gives one the idea that it is about to burst open by the cracks and gaping fissures that appear on its surface, as if no longer capable of retaining its pent-up subterranean heat, sighing, as it were, for the cooling moisture of the tarrying monsoon, when all Nature—animate and inanimate—wears that grilled, arid aspect so peculiar to the season, the greatest care should be exercised in the use of lights and fires, especially in the huts of natives, who, unfortunately for themselves, being more or less inclined to the doctrine of fatalism, are woefully heedless of such precautions. The most evanescent spark, the thrown-away match—supposed to have ceased its glow—the live dropping from pipe or cigar reaching any of the tinder-like substances around is almost sure to kindle and develop into a destructive flame, spreading from house to house, and reducing them to ashes in an incredibly short space of time. The prevalence during the hot weather of furnace-like land-winds, which blow violently, sometimes with scarcely any intermission throughout both day and night, serve to ignite the tiniest particle, and fan it into a devouring blaze which carries all before it.

With a strange fatuity—the outcome perhaps of the fatalism already referred to—the poorer natives perform all their culinary operations inside their huts or houses, and, stranger still, the probabilities are that they place the three stones forming their *choollas* or *uddappoos* (fire-places) close to some combustible or inflammable

matter; *i.e.* a heap of cotton, a bundle of straw or dry faggots, or cloths on a line, hung across the little room perhaps directly over the fireplaces, besides the sunbaked thatch just above their heads, so that conflagrations are constantly occurring in towns, villages, and the sepoy lines—where there are any—attended with such calamitous consequences that the wretched sufferers are practically ruined, and the effect of these visitations can better be imagined than described, and from which it is long ere they recover.

Independently of what the victims themselves undergo, the trouble and difficulty of contending with a fire in the lines of a native regiment—both to officers and men—are trying in the extreme, and when so many as three or four outbreaks happen in one day at different times, and all ranks have to turn out on each occasion, the reader will be able to form some conception of what the whole battalion experiences while fighting the flames, in their anxiety to prevent the whole of the lines from being burnt down. The number of huts in the quarters of a single corps that are destroyed by fire in the course of one hot season is incredible, and the loss sustained by the occupants is, to them, most serious. The scorching blast of the high land-wind literally fans the flames; the spectacle, especially at night, is truly appalling, and the heat from the conflagration, added to that of the weather, is so great that strong men have been known to faint under its effects. Fortunately, however, these fires are rarely

attended with loss of life : quickly though they blaze up, as quickly do the inmates fly out of doors — a comparatively easy matter, for the tenements are not much larger, measured any way, than the outside coal-house one sees in this country : there are no stairs to descend, no passages to thread ; a single door intervenes between threatened death within, and the safety of the street without, and this pushed open, the occupants frantically quit ; but seldom are they able to save any but the smaller and more portable of their belongings.

During this particular hot weather, the infantry regiment alluded to suffered from an abnormal number of fires in their lines ; and it often happened that the fire-alarm bugle sounded just as the officers were about sitting down to dinner in the mess-house—a most inopportune moment, as all will acknowledge ; so there was a vast amount of discontent and growling when they had to forgo their comfortable meal, and exchange their cool mess dress for buckled-up uniforms—to go hungry into the midst of burning huts, get covered with dirt and smuts from head to foot in assisting to smother the flames, arrest their further progress by pulling down the adjacent houses, throwing water over the still glowing ruins, working the hand-pump—if there was one—and bawling themselves hoarse in giving orders to the men to do this, that, and the other.

One of the junior officers of this corps was very neat and dandyish about his person : he always gave vent to a string of bitter invectives

against the profession on occasions such as these, vowing that if he had had any foreknowledge of his being expected to do the duties of a fireman, he would have seen the Service far enough before he entered it.

"Fireman?" echoed a perspiring, begrimed senior Major, overhearing the grumbler; "what of that? A man calling himself a soldier should be prepared to turn his hand to anything!"

"What—even to help in putting out a fire, sir?" retorted the Sub half-indignantly.

"Ay, not only to put it out, but to go through it, with or without water, and eat it too, if necessary!"

"Eat it, Major?"

"Of course! You've heard of fire-eaters before now, I suppose? They flourished in the army during your father's time, and were always ready to share in a meal of fire—from the pistol's mouth."

This fire-duty indeed proved very harassing; but what made it more annoying in the present instance was a strong suspicion—if not absolute certainty—that in nine cases out of ten these outbursts were the result of premeditated mischief on the part of a set of rogues who made it a habit of bringing about conflagrations in regimental lines for their own pecuniary benefit. These scoundrels belong to a certain class of native—to be found in almost every town and village as semi-permanent residents; and in greater numbers at those military stations where sepoy regiments are cantoned, and who are quartered in lines—not barracks. They earn

their livelihood—some—by building the mud walls; others—by thatching the huts of the people, and are always employed in erecting and repairing the sepoy lines. They are of one low caste, and consequently the two sections—the wall-raisers and the thatchers—are mutually interested, and play into each other's hands. While some are engaged in constructing the walls, the others collect and prepare the materials for the roofing, such as bamboos, thin jungle-wood rafters, resembling English clothes-props, fibre for tying, cocoanut or palmyra tree leaves, which they dry and plat into so many small mats to serve for the thatch. These supplies are brought round for sale to those requiring them, and at a certain season of the year the natives lay in stocks of all such requisites for thatching, repairing, and otherwise putting their houses in order against the coming monsoon. Now, the wall-builders and thatchers or roofers, in order to ensure engagements as well as a market for their materials, depute secret agents from among their own party, who, carefully disguised, prowl about after dark in the villages and sepoy lines, where they surreptitiously thrust pieces of slow-match —of their own manufacture—or bits of still live charcoal into the thatches of the huts. The dry, rotting leaves catch at once, and the "little fire" thus initiated, being fanned by a high wind, speedily flares up into a "great matter," and culminates into a roaring conflagration, laying hut after hut in heaps of ruins before anything can be done or devised to stem the progress of the devouring element.

The dastardly trick above described is very common, but one which it is difficult to detect; for the causes of these fires being always attributed by the ignorant masses to carelessness on the part of the householders—either in their cooking, or the handling of their open saucer-and-wick oil lights—the real culprits escape with impunity, and thus oblige the victims of their nefariousness to employ and purchase material from the very men who are the sole originators of all their calamities and losses. The villains in question generally manage to be skulking about in the evenings, at meal-time, when all are indoors, and the street comparatively deserted, so that as soon as a fire manifests itself, they easily get away without observation, and presently come running to the spot under the guise of innocent spectators, who congregate in such numbers on these occasions as to enhance the difficulty to the rescue parties in fighting the flames.

One evening the sepoys contrived to catch one of these rascally incendiaries red-handed, in the very act of stuffing a piece of smouldering oil rag into the thatch of a hut. The wretch was very much alarmed, and, native-like, loudly proclaimed his innocence, while the sepoy, holding him with one hand, used the other in snatching out the rag which was all but kindling the roof. The soldier meanwhile raised an outcry; a crowd soon gathered, and, on learning the truth from their comrade, the infuriated sepoys seized the arsonite, vociferating loudly, "*Phansee dao! Phansee kurro*! (Hang him!

hang him!)" Proceeding to put this into execution, one of the men had actually reeved a noosed rope round the ruffian's neck, and they were about dragging him off to the nearest tree, when the European officer of the day, who happened to be going "rounds" in the lines at the time, attracted by the uproar, hastened to the spot, and prevented anything further taking place, otherwise the offender would have been lynched there and then. He was surrendered to the civil authorities, and ultimately sentenced to transportation.

Government used to allow a certain number of "fire-hooks" and buckets for every native battalion—to be employed in the event of line-fires. The former were heavy, unwieldy affairs, and the latter far too small—regular thimbles, not nearly of a capacity to be effective. The fire-hooks were designed to pull down the huts contiguous to the burning one; but they could not be freely handled on account of their weight, while the water thrown from the diminutive buckets seemed to increase the fury of the flames instead of tending to quench them. If each corps in garrison was supplied—as they now are—with some sort of fire-engine, and hose long enough to reach the wells, they would have been much more effective than all the cumbersome fire-hooks and toy-buckets in the world.

The sepoys suffered acutely from these repeatedly occurring fires: the mere rebuilding and rethatching of their huts told severely on their small means, for the entire house had to be reconstructed, as the walls would crack from top

to bottom through the heat of the fire, and were not to be relied on. Besides this, when a fire takes place, everything that can possibly be got out of the burning building is thrown promiscuously into the street, and here the light-fingered gentry among the spectators find it an easy matter to help themselves and carry off whatever they can lay their hands on. The confusion, the noise caused by the raging flames, the crowds of idle lookers-on, and the general attention centred on the fire itself, materially assist the thieves in making off with their booty; and, indeed, it not unfrequently happens that the more unscrupulous among the sepoys' families take a hand in this description of plundering, instances being known of women — especially old crones—who have fought with each other over the salvage chattels of a neighbour whose house has been burning, under pretence of guarding them from further damage or depredation, but in reality to be appropriated by themselves as loot. The crackling of the wood and bamboo, the roaring of the flames, the shouting of the men, the screaming of the women, the crying of the children, the surging of the crowd, all unite in producing a veritable pandemonium, which renders the duty of attempting to preserve order a matter of no little difficulty, especially the prevention of thieving; for when the things are tossed out into the street among a mob of bystanders, all the vigilance in the world is of no avail—the evil-disposed work their will, and the poor victims of the fire are further victimised by the robber.

The frequent jungle fires that take place in India are generally—and wrongly—attributed to spontaneous combustion, or—more rightly—to friction between dry wood, rubbed in contact by the action of the wind ; but if the truth were known, these conflagrations are the handiwork of certain nomad forest tribes, who set the jungle alight for purposes of their own. Very often, too, when a village near a jungle is harried by tigers, or elephants descend by night on the cultivation and damage it, the villagers light the jungle to scare away feline or pachyderm, as the case may be. A *ryot* or cultivator fires the dry crops of a neighbour, against whom he may bear a grudge, whereupon the neighbour retaliates in the same way.

Once, when a famine threatened in South India, A and B, the two principal native merchants of a small seaport, dispatched their *patamars* or little sea-going vessels to another port farther down the coast, where rice was cheaper and more plentiful, to fill up with the grain and return as fast as possible—the civil district authorities having already called for tenders. The merchants were rivals, and everything depending on being first in with the rice, the *serangs* or captains of the *patamars* made all haste ; the more readily, as they had both been promised a reward by their masters. Well, the two vessels arrived simultaneously at the port of loading, where, after filling up to the chocks, they made sail for home. On the voyage, however, A's *patamar* carried away her single mast, and of course had to heave-to to repair

damages. Consequently, B's ship alone reached port late in the evening. The *serang* went ashore and reported the other boat's disablement to his master: A heard of it; and that night, when all was quiet, accompanied by some retainers, he went off in a small canoe to B's *patamar*,—which would not be unloaded till the morrow,—set her hull on fire by means of tarred rags, and sheered off without being seen by any one. The doomed craft soon flared up: the crew of four men becoming demoralised, jumped into the sea and swam ashore; but before measures could be taken to save the ship, she went down—a mass of flames—at her moorings. The other *patamar* came in the next morning, and A secured the deal. There was an inquiry, but as nothing could be proved, the matter remained a mystery for some years, and then only came out when A, having occasion to dismiss one of the men who had assisted him in the arson, that man disclosed the whole incident.

CHAPTER XXIII

POISONING

POISONING is a very common crime in India: all classes resort to it when revenge has to be satiated, a score to be paid off, or any one obnoxious to be got out of the way. An instance of one among the very highest in the land employing this means of taking life is furnished by what was known as the "Baroda Case"—a veritable *cause célèbre* that created a profound sensation at the time. Briefly told, Baroda is the capital of a native feudatory State called the Guicowar's Dominions, so named from the title of the ruling prince. It is situated some 230 miles north of Bombay, forms a part of that Presidency, and has a population of over 100,000. The State is subordinate to the Bombay Government, which is represented by a British Resident, or Political Agent, stationed at Baroda, the capital. In 1874, an attempt was made to poison the British Resident, and after exhaustive inquiry, spreading over many days, the Guicowar himself was accused of the crime, and stood his trial before a judicial court composed half of British officers, half of native notabilities. The verdict arrived at, however, not being unanimous, the Guicowar was acquitted: nevertheless, on the

strength of the evidence that had been deduced at the trial, the Government of India deposed the prince, and placed another member of the family on the *guddhee* or throne.

In most villages, especially those situated along route or *dâk* roads, and where there may be no tanks or rivers, certain wells are set apart for drinking purposes, and close to them are generally to be found the *dhurrumsalas, chuttrums,* or native travellers' rests, also the camping-ground for marching troops. All goes well, unless the villagers on one hand and the halted travellers or troops on the other fall out. There are many causes for misunderstandings: the villagers are timid, and often in the minority; the travellers or troops may treat them badly, appropriate some of their property, insult their women, not pay for what they use or consume, or even quarrel for priority at the wells. The yokels do not retaliate by force when dealing with large bodies of ordinary travellers who may behave truculently: they have no legal means of redress, for, as a rule, there is no police, no civil authority of any weight to appeal to on the spot. If, however, the offenders be sepoys of an encamped regiment, the aggrieved villagers may try and approach the commanding officer with their complaints of this or that high-handedness on the part of his soldiers. If they succeed in getting the ear of the military chief, he will inquire into the case and see justice done; but, oftener than not, the sepoys divining that the villagers have come to complain against some of their brethren-in-arms, hustle the poor

wretches away before they can gain access to the commandant, representing that august personage to be a very tiger of ferocity with those who dare to lodge an accusation against any of his men, that, instead of granting them any redress or compensation, he will probably order the village to be burnt down over their heads, and that the wisest thing they can do is to go away quietly. Thus foiled, and smarting under a sense of being denied justice, even at the hands of one of the ruling race, the villagers retire; but they are not such guileless simpletons as to be content without satisfaction of some kind: though unable to obtain justice by fair means, they will have their revenge by foul. Even in the smallest of hamlets a *vythean* or *hâkeem* is to be found—the doctor of the community, who, besides practising the healing art, has some knowledge of deadly drugs. He has heard all about the misdeeds of the sepoys, and now, on learning the result of the villagers' mission to the camp, he sympathises with them, and readily meets their request for some poison. He knows what it is for; he asks no questions; he hunts about in his stock, and then making up a couple of large packets, secured in the second bark of the plantain tree, hands them to the villagers, and with pretended or genuine reluctance accepts the money tendered in payment.

It is night: the sepoys have finished their evening meal; the bugles have sounded the first and second retreat; the officers' mess-tent empties; the murmur of many voices gradually dies out, and at last all is still. Ten o'clock

strikes on the regimental gong: a temporary bustle ensues as the sentry reliefs are posted. Again a hush. Twelve o'clock booms; a repetition of sentry-relieving; then another hush. A sepoy is posted on guard over the two wells; he walks up and down his beat; he is wide awake, but fails to notice a naked man out on the plain beyond, who, while the soldier paces one way, lies lizard-fashion on the earth, but starts to his feet and glides forward towards the wells as soon as the sentinel faces about. The skulker reaches the first well, crouches behind its parapet wall, and directly the sepoy turns, he casts something into the water. Watching his opportunity, he goes to the second well, and having repeated the performance there, slinks away as he came. Morning dawns; the réveillé blows; the camp wakes into life; a few early-bird sepoys go to the wells, draw water, and return to their tents. Shortly a buzz of voices—mingled with ejaculations of astonishment and cries of pain; men run hither and thither with consternation depicted on their faces: European officers, who have been communicated with, come rushing out of their tents—hurriedly accoutring themselves: the truth is suspected: a *havildar's* or sergeant's guard is doubled down to the wells, and ordered to allow no one to touch them: the regimental doctor and apothecary, under the guidance of the native day-officer, hasten to certain tents where men—those who have drunk of the well water that morning—are lying in agony: the medical men soon diagnose the symptoms, and for the next hour or so both are busy adminis-

tering emetics and plying the stomach-pump. Fortunately, these measures—taken in time—prove effectual, and no one dies. The doctor examines the water: he is sure it is poisoned, from the indications, but he is unable to test it out there owing to want of analytical plant; so he sends a bottle of the well water by special messenger to the civil surgeon of the nearest cantonment for analysis, and who in due course reports that he found the sample of water to contain strong traces of such-and-such poison. In the meanwhile, the civil authorities and police, who have been summoned to the spot, hold the village: directly the analyser's verdict is received they make an official inquiry; but nothing comes of it: everybody keeps counsel, and so the matter falls through.

Poison is frequently put into requisition by native women of ill-fame as a means of gratifying their jealousy. A dancing-girl of mature age, hitherto a reigning star, with some great man among her clientele, finding that, owing to the waning of her charms, a younger, fresher beauty is beginning to monopolise his attentions, the discarded one will either commission some old crone—generally a panderess—to administer poison to her supplanter, or she will suborn one of her own more humble admirers, who has hitherto sighed in vain for her favours, with a promise of her indulgences if he accomplishes the deed. Either the bawd or infatuated admirer succeeds; but then, strangely enough, if the poisoned girl dies, her relatives or friends, though at no loss as to the instigator, will not

denounce her, but probably give out that the girl died from natural causes, or from snake-bite. This in order to rend the soul of the other woman by the sense of her balked vengeance, or the torturing suspicion that the crone—whom she had rewarded in advance—or the lover—who had also been already gratified — had played her false. Anyhow, the police are kept out of it, and the jealous woman is none the better, for now her wealthy friend, who has, of course, heard of the incident, breaks off with her entirely, fearing lest she should make a similar attack on him. To propitiate her, however, and prevent her from nursing animosity against him for his defection, he sends her a bag of rupees or some article of jewellery — a measure that generally has the desired effect, for these creatures are venal to their finger-tips, and can be bought for a price in more ways than one.

As a rule, the native Indian domestic is a long-suffering individual, and passively endures a vast amount of abuse and ill-treatment from the more inconsiderate and hot-headed of his European employers, male or female ; but, like the worm, he will sometimes turn and retaliate in various ways, such as stabbing, shooting, setting fire to the bungalow ; or take minor reprisals, as stealing into the *Mem-Sahib's* (lady's) bedroom and cutting off her hair (a case of this occurred not long ago in Calcutta), laming the horses, damaging the conveyance, down to wantonly breaking the crockery or glassware, and swearing that the crows did the mischief. Here, however, is an instance of attempt to " poison."

A man named F——, at a small civil station in North-West India, suffered from a notoriously bad temper: he was frequently getting into trouble for maltreating natives, beating his domestics, and so forth. At this time he was a bachelor of thirty-two, otherwise a nice fellow enough, for he always behaved equably towards people of his own colour; but he hated the natives, and made no secret of the fact. Over and over again had he been summoned for assault, and never did he question the justice of a verdict unfavourable to himself: he always appeared before the magistrate with a smiling face, freely owning that he kicked this man for "cheek," thrashed that man for disrespect, cut open another man's head by throwing a stone at him for singing on the road outside his gates; that he cuffed the *dâk-wallah* or postman for being late with the English mail letters, and so on, *ad infinitum*. He would attend the court on these occasions with his pocket full of money, and gaily pay down the fine—whatever it was—ere leaving. As for his own household servants, he was in chronic hot water with them, dismissals or desertions being frequent; and very often was he hard pushed in obtaining others, for his treatment was well known, and men hesitated to enter his service. At last this state of affairs grew perfectly scandalous; it reached the ears of the authorities, who, of course, had heard rumours of F——'s conduct, and his constant appearances at court, and the whisper went round that unless he mended his ways, Government would request him to send in his

papers. Friends now suggested that he should marry: the presence of a wife, they thought, to take over the household management, would give him less excuse for losing his temper, in fact, might wean him altogether from the habit. Though hitherto showing no inclination towards matrimony, the idea now pleased him, so, being pecuniarily well off, he at once obtained three months' leave without pay, went home, and being a good-looking fellow, with plenty of friends in the old country, managed—in the short time at his disposal—to meet, woo, win, and marry a girl, whom he brought out with him. During the first month or so all went well; but F——'s passionate disposition would not be denied, for one day, at breakfast, in a sudden fit of ungovernable fury, he dashed a jugful of boiled milk into the *khansamah's* (butler's) face, because the milk was diluted with water. The man was a Punjaubee Mahomedan: he said or did nothing, though the lower part of his face and neck were cruelly scalded. He immediately left the house, and F—— quite expected to receive the usual summons; instead of which, after a week or so, the *khansamah* presented himself before F——, calmly requested permission to resume his duties, and asked that the stopgap butler should be sent away. Glad rather than otherwise, for the man was an excellent servant, F—— acquiesced, and told his wife to reinstate him. For a while nothing happened; then, a few days later, in the afternoon, Mrs. F——'s English-speaking Eurasian *ayah* or maid—the *khansamah's rând* or concubine, as it subse-

quently leaked out—came privily to her mistress while F—— was at his office, and with tears in her eyes besought the lady to be careful what she ate, to examine her food before partaking of it. Mrs. F—— was astounded; she tried to make the woman explain herself, but to no purpose. "If I said more," whispered the *ayah* significantly, "I might do harm to one whom I love; and it is only because you are always good and kind to me, ma'am, that I have said what I have said, because I do not wish you to suffer for the sins of another. Be warned!"

However great the mystification produced by the *ayah's* ominous communication, common sense, ordinary perspicacity, told Mrs. F—— that some plot—of which the woman evidently had cognizance—was being hatched against the master of the house, that his life was being aimed at, that poison would be the agent, and that the maid,—to whom she had been very kind,—moved by compunction or gratitude, had put her mistress on guard.

Though in nowise brutal to his young wife, F—— had by now gained an undoubted mastery over her, or, to use a pardonable colloquialism, "established a funk" in her. Knowing that if she repeated to him what the *ayah* had uttered, there would be a scene between him and the servants, she resolved to keep her own counsel on the subject—for the present, at least. At meals, being always served first, she would carefully examine her own food, and if she detected anything suspicious in it she would prevent her husband from taking a mouthful.

At dinner that night the poor girl underwent a very purgatory of doubt and anxiety: she slightly tasted and carefully scrutinised dish after dish, forestalling her husband with each, but, discovering nothing to arouse apprehension, she held her peace. Now came the pudding—a meringue guava tart, a sweet that F—— delighted in. The tart was brought round to her first, and she was about helping herself when she noticed in the egg-and-sugar covering numerous minute glistening points that flashed and scintillated in the rays of the lamplight. Danger signals at last! Mrs. F—— could be courageous and resourceful when put to it. Commanding her features, she took the dish from the servant, placed it before her, and in a low, earnest whisper, couched in French, begged her husband to go over to the police station close by, and ask the Inspector to come at once—with constables. Realising that his wife was actuated by some powerful motive for behaving thus, he obeyed, and soon returned with the police. Acting on a few words of emphatic entreaty, breathed by the lady into his ear, the Inspector instructed his men to prevent a single servant from quitting the premises: then the trio proceeded to examine the tart, with the result that those glittering points proved to be nothing more or less than particles of pulverised glass—a conclusion which the Inspector practically substantiated by diluting a portion of the top covering of the tart in water, allowing the mixture to settle, and pouring off the liquid, when, sure enough, the sediment that remained was pow-

dered glass, which, though finely ground, felt unquestionably gritty to the touch, as all three in succession mashed it on a plate with a spoon.

"I have heard of this device before, sir," quoth the Inspector, an educated Moslem, speaking good English. "While not poison in the ordinary sense, I believe that glass powder is highly dangerous, as, if swallowed, it soon penetrates the intestines: there is no antidote, as for regular poisons, besides which, it will not come away by emetics or stomach-pump. This must be the work of one of your servants, sir, so I will send for them."

Hereupon the Inspector directed his constables to bring in the domestics. The police questioned, cross-questioned, and threatened them: all bore the ordeal without flinching, except the *ayah*, who, after some fencing with her inquisitors, suddenly broke down and went off into a fit of hysterics. Then the Inspector and two of his men—leaving the remainder on guard over the domestics—took lanterns and proceeded to search the servants' outhouses: they discovered nothing of an incriminating nature till, while passing along to the rear of the range, and just abreast of the *khansamah's* godown or room, they found a small grindstone and roller lying close outside the wall, as if they had been thrown through the little back window. Although one would think the concussion with the ground ought to have freed both stone and roller of any traces of what they had been last used for, the sharp-eyed police immediately saw particles of powdered glass adhering to

WADDARS.

both ! The case was tried, and the *khansamah*, on the strength of the circumstantial evidence brought against him, stood convicted of attempt to injure — if not murder — his employers by means of introducing powdered glass into their food, while the *ayah* was judged guilty of being accessary to her paramour's deed, but who was discharged in consideration of her warning Mrs. F——, as that lady testified to. The *khansamah* finally admitted his guilt, and said that when he was serving an officer in Cashmere, he learnt that the natives there, desirous of getting rid of an enemy, frequently used ground glass instead of poison, as they considered there was not so much *goonnah* or sin in employing the former as the latter. The man, in his defence, pleaded grave provocation on F——'s part, and put in a certificate from the Civil Apothecary testifying to his—the culprit's—attendance as an out-patient at the hospital for treatment of the injuries received by the boiled milk. But all this availed him nothing : the judge remarked that the law was open to him, and that if he had lodged a complaint in the proper quarter, no doubt the magistrate would have afforded him redress.

CHAPTER XXIV

INTEMPERANCE—THE OPIUM HABIT

COMPARING the people of Madras with those of Bombay and Bengal, the former are far less punctilious on questions of caste and religion. Especially is this the case with the native soldiery: the Southerners put aside their qualms and prejudices when exigencies of the Service interfere with their observance: as a late Madras Army Major-General would state that his men used to say, "We pack religion into our knapsacks, sir, whenever the colours are unfurled, or when duty calls": sentiments breathing of an *esprit de corps*, which, alas! is no longer existent. The Madrassis not being particular, therefore, as regards strict adherence to their religious tenets, nor too strongly tied down by the trammels of caste, they are prone to indulge in the good things of life — whether solids or fluids—much to the disgust of the more bigoted Northerners, who look down on the Madras sepoys with contempt and aversion. Generally speaking, however, and taking the natives as a whole, it cannot be denied that intoxication prevails to a great extent among them. Then, again, although the high-caste Hindoos and more orthodox Mahomedans of

Upper India do not indulge in *drink*, they are—notwithstanding whatever may be urged to the contrary—far from being abstemious; for, if they do not imbibe spirituous liquors, they are immoderate smokers of tobacco highly impregnated with opium; and who can deny that opium-smoking or opium-eating is just as harmful, just as conducive to the committal of violent crime as dram-drinking? The stock excuse advanced by all natives for spirituous inebriation is the medicinal one. A man caught intoxicated will, when he regains his senses, invariably put forward some such plea as—"I took it because I felt ill, sir," or, "I had eaten something for my dinner which gave me stomach-ache, sir, so I drank a little arrack to relieve the pain"; contingencies which, should they affect us, we would correct with a spoonful of brandy, whereas they, even supposing the reason advanced is a true one, pour the equally potent arrack down their throats by the pint, or more.

The partiality to liquor among our domestic servants of all grades is proverbial: caste distinctions are thrown aside, and they are all of a level when "something short" is to be obtained for the taking. They think nothing of helping themselves to the contents of the unsecured liquor case or tantalus; indeed, should you even be careful of locking them, the rascals will often manage to procure a key which opens one or the other. A bottle of liquor once uncorked, the contents very soon vanish—far quicker than the family alone can consume them.

There was a military officer, a young bachelor,

who, not long after his arrival in the country, was struck by the rapid disappearance of his spirits; and, as he was a very moderate drinker himself, he had no alternative but to suspect his servants of stealing it. He taxed them with the robbery, which, of course, they indignantly denied: he laid all sorts of traps, and though the leakage still went on, he was unable to bring the theft home; the rascals vowed through thick and thin that they never drank a drop of the master's liquor, nor would they dare to—to save their lives. However, nothing daunted, the officer determined to discover the thief, and with this object he medicated the contents of his bottles with strong doses of emetic, procured from his friend, the regimental surgeon, whom he admitted to the secret. This done, he left the house on pretended business, and on returning at dinner-time he found his dressing-boy, matey, groom, and tailor all *hors de combat* in their godowns, suffering from violent sickness, and on examining the bottles, saw that the contents had visibly diminished during his absence. When the culprits had sufficiently recovered, the officer assembled and questioned them: they all denied point-blank having touched the bottles, and attributed their indisposition to some sweetmeats that one of their number had run out and bought in the bazaar. But facts are stubborn things, and here were proofs positive; and thinking they deserved a good scare, the master told them that the bottles had been purposely poisoned, and that their present sickness was the forerunner of death. This frightened the

wretches to such a degree that every man confessed to the theft, and began imploring their master to give them an antidote ; but instead of complying with the request, he sent the sober groom—who had not participated in the theft—for the police, and had them locked up. They were subsequently tried and sentenced to imprisonment.

The evil effects of this propensity for intemperance among the natives are too numerous to be entered upon in detail ; suffice to say that they often result in most serious crimes—murder, violence, mutiny, and suicide. But is this tendency to alcoholic excess to be wondered at when they have such glaring examples set them by the governing race ? Do not the natives see how addicted white men—including British soldiers—are to that which we profess to condemn ? Do not the domestics at messes and, ay, at private houses, frequently observe cases of inebriety not only among us men, but also our women ? Do not peons, orderlies, messengers in the ordinary course of their duties see us drinking — vulgarly called "pegging" — at all hours of the day ?

B——, another young officer travelling where the railway had yet to come, thus describes his experiences of a drunken brawl at a stage village :—

"I had sent the baggage-carts with my servant on ahead to the next stage, with orders to pitch camp, and have tea ready for me. Well, when I arrived at the village, I noticed it to be in a state of commotion ; people bawling and shouting

in terms which I at once comprehended, but too unparliamentary for translation. My *palanquin* was carried to a *tope* or grove of trees, where I found my tent erected, my horses tethered, and kit arranged right enough, but no servant, no tea to welcome me. I divined the cause of the hubbub, and upon inquiry of the *syces* (grooms) learnt—as I suspected—that my rascal of a head boy had got drunk, also that he had been insolent to the *putail* or village headman, and had struck some of the villagers, who were now paying the fellow back in his own coin. I fancied, however, that not only had my servant been indulging, but the headman and his people were also under the influence of liquor, otherwise there would not have been such an infernal row. Anticipating ructions, I stood by the *palanquin* with revolver and sword buckled on, and this merely to let the drunken rogues see that I was prepared to give them a warm reception should they take it into their addled pates to attack me, which there was no saying whether they would do or not do, considering the excited state they appeared to be in, though I determined to abstain from proceeding to extremities unless driven to it. Presently, above the general din, I heard loud shouts of '*Kotoo! Kotoo!* (Beat! Beat!)' from the direction of the village, and then came my wretched servant—stumbling and staggering his fastest—pursued by a mob of men; equally unsteady on their legs, armed with sticks, and giving the inebriated runaway '*Kotoo*' to their hearts' content. It served him right, and I was rather glad to see him punished; but fearful

lest the villagers should attack my bivouac, I warned them not to come nearer, and that if they had any complaint to make against my servant, to do so through their headman—to whom alone I was responsible for any misconduct on the part of my followers. But, paying no heed, they came on, whereat my domestic took refuge behind the *palanquin*, and tearfully implored me to protect him. Seeing that matters looked grave, I drew my revolver and threatened to shoot if they approached a step nearer ; also that I would report them at the *zillah* (district headquarter) station, a stage farther on, for the disgraceful disturbance they had created. These measures had the desired effect : the crowd halted, consulted, and pushed forward one of their number as spokesman, who said to me, ' Your servant struck the *putail*, and we are come to seize him, by the *putail's* orders.'

" ' Tell the *putail* to come here himself and prefer the charge,' I replied, strongly suspecting that the man was drunk — too far gone to move.

" ' He is ill,' said the fellow, ' and cannot walk.'

" ' Very well, then,' I retorted, ' you shall not take my servant.' "

" ' We will go and report to the *putail* that you resist the village civil authorities ! '

" ' Do so,' returned I, ' and tell the *putail* I believe that, like the rest of you, he is just as drunk as my servant, and that unless he presents himself instantly, I shall report him to the Collector as having been too intoxicated to

perform his duty when called upon by an officer travelling through his village! Now, be off, or I'll make you!'

"The cap—thrown at random—fitted: they sneaked away like so many beaten dogs, and that was the end of it."

Opium is the dried juice of the white poppy-head, and cultivated in certain parts of India, as well as other Asiatic countries, and in Egypt. The drug comes largely into medicine, especially in the shape of laudanum, morphine, etc., and is employed as a sedative as well as stimulant. Taken in moderation, it produces a very pleasant sensation, but which may be followed not only by fits of depression, but a dangerous temporary insanity; while used in greater quantity it is well-known to be a powerful narcotic poison. The customary use of opium, or, as it is more commonly styled, "The Opium Habit," as practised by the natives of India, China, etc., is highly injurious to the moral and physical condition of man; and many grave crimes are attributable to a promiscuous over-indulgence in the drug. Various are the opinions of competent authorities on the Opium Habit. One—with thirty-five years' Indian experience to back him—says that, with a very few exceptions, he had not seen any one much the worse for eating, drinking, or smoking preparations of opium. Some, he says, take it as a protection against fever in malarious districts: others drink a decoction in the early morning as a stimulant, and smoke or eat it—to promote sleep. A second says that his experiences show the habit to be a most pernicious

one ; that, once acquired, very few can exercise moderation, and that he has met many natives martyrs to the excessive use of the drug : moreover, that in the various jails he had been connected with during his service, the hardier criminals incarcerated therein have in most cases been found to be opium-consumers. A third states that while he has known many temperate smokers of the drug, he has no doubt that to over-indulgence in the habit can be traced fanatical outbursts, murders, suicides, running amuck, and so forth.

Whatever may be the opinions held by savants and specialists regarding the uses or abuses of opium, there is no question that too much of it is—like excess of liquor-drinking—one of the chief causes of crime in India. In spite of the heavy duty imposed both on the drug and on spirituous liquors,—the latter whether locally manufactured or imported,—in spite of police regulations and *abkari* (liquor) regulations, whereby the retail vender is tied down to certain stringent restrictions, the native—high or low, rich or poor—will have his spirits, will have his opium ; and there is no getting over the fact that our laws—however binding and obeyed they may be in other respects—are evaded and violated so long as the vender of the drug, no matter in what shape, the vender of liquor, no matter of what brand or description, manage to have them on sale, and the native possesses a four-anna piece to purchase one or the other.

At all our chief ports which Asiatic-manned

vessels enter, opium dens for smoking, eating, and drinking are almost sure to exist. In the dock slums of London, for instance, these dens abound: they consist of comfortable rooms furnished with two or more lounges, each with a small table by its side, on which stands an open-wick light. The smokers lie full length on the lounges, with pipes in their mouths, drawing the vapour into their lungs, speaking not, but frequently sighing, as if from very beatitude; then they lose consciousness, and remain comatose till the effect of the fumes wears off. These houses are kept by Chinese, and are frequented at all hours of the day and night by coloured or Asiatic seamen, stokers, firemen, from the shipping, or others domiciled for the time in London. When a man comes and expresses a wish for an opium smoke, he is shown to a vacant lounge: he settles down in it, and the Chinaman attendant provides the customer with some opium pellets in a small saucer, a pipe, a kind of "pricker," a jug of water, and a glass. Then he charges the pipe with the drug, and having ignited it over the flame of the oil-lamp, presents it to the lounger, who, throwing himself back on the couch, smokes either till the stuff is expended, or, overcome by the fumes, he sinks into a state of obfuscation. The above — with but little variation—can be taken as a criterion of what goes on in these dens daily and nightly without let or hindrance from us!

This, I hope, bears out the corollary suggested by the title of this book. While, necessarily, I

have dealt with the seamy side of the Indian native's character, described it in conjunction with his criminality, I could, on the other hand, speak to many noble qualities displayed by some of these people, *e.g.* bravery, presence of mind, generosity, fidelity, loving-kindness to their kindred and to their animals. To a lesser degree have I known bright exceptions to exhibit honesty; for, though they will not scruple to cheat you out of an anna, you can, by putting them on their honour, as it were, entrust them with all your goods, take a far journey, and on your return you will find everything intact. The one insurmountable rock, however, on which they split is a universal disregard for truth—a failing to which the very best of them are prone. While I have been more or less victimised by the natives of India, still, knowing them for what they are, as set forth in these pages, I entertain many kindly recollections of them, and would gladly see the clock put back a quarter of a century, and live the time over again among them, when the Indian native—unspoilt by over-education, visits to Europe, and retaining a respect for his own prejudices of caste and creed—was a far better man, collectively, than he is at the present day.

One word more. The term "Anglo-Indian" appearing in this book, has been used under the old acceptation that ruled up to within the last year or two, and meaning the white Englishman residing or domiciled in the country—in contradistinction to the Eurasian, East Indian, or

Indo-Briton. Now, the white Englishman apparently is to have no distinctive appellation, while the others are to be styled "Anglo-Indian" indiscriminately—a case of "Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis!"

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Intimate Memoirs of Napoleon III.: Personal Reminiscences of the Man and the Emperor by the late BARON D'AMBES; translated by A. R. Allinson. In two volumes, demy 8vo, fully illustrated, 24s. net the set.

This book is the private diary of a life-long and intimate friend of Louis Napoleon, whose identity is here thinly veiled under a somewhat obvious pseudonym. The Baron first made the acquaintance of the future Emperor when scarcely more than a boy at Arenaberg, the Swiss home where he and his mother Queen Hortense of Holland were living in exile. Deeply impressed from the beginning by the personality of Louis Napoleon, the Baron gradually became impressed with the idea that his friend was a son of Napoleon I., and in his diary he alleges some startling evidence in favour of his theory. From his earliest association with Louis he began jotting down incidents, conversations, and reflections as they occurred, and to these he added evidence from every source, letters, documents, newspaper cuttings, which, after the death of Louis Napoleon and within a few years of his own, he prepared for publication. The book therefore supplies a large quantity of first hand material, for the first time in English, for a survey and study of the life and character of one of the most enigmatic figures in modern history. The Baron follows his hero from boyhood through the years of exile and adventure, as a conspirator in Italy, as a refugee in London, as President of the Republic of '48, finally as Emperor, down to the disasters of 1870, the fatal day at Sedan and the death at Chislehurst. In every phase of that chequered career this unique diary throws illuminating sidelights on a number of interesting and hitherto imperfectly understood episodes.

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This volume consists of the diaries of the Baroness d'Anethan, widow of the late Baron Albert d'Anethan, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the King of the Belgians at the Court of Japan. For fifteen or sixteen years Baron d'Anethan held this position, and during the whole of that period the Baroness described day by day the events, historical, social, and official, in which she was taking part. The Diary commences with her first day in the Far East, and deals with the stirring events of the following years, the Japanese-Chinese War, the tragedies of the Boxer trouble, experiences of the Red Cross work, the various travels and expeditions in the lovely interior of Japan, Court, official, and religious functions, many no longer existing, and above all the exciting incidents of the Russo-Japanese War. All these are described with a realistic and vivid pen.

The History of Garrards, Crown Jewellers, 1721—1911. A superb volume, printed throughout on art paper, in two colours, with nearly 40 whole-page Illustrations. Cr. 8vo, cloth gilt, 5/- net.

Of the great London businesses dating from the early days of the 18th century, few possess the historical interest which centres in the House of Garrard. Between 1721 and 1911, the Garrards have been goldsmiths, silversmiths and jewellers to six Sovereigns in succession. All the great notabilities of seventeen eventful decades have been their customers, and the archives of the firm are complete from the day the sign of the King's Arms was set up at the corner of Panton Street and the Haymarket down to the recent removal of the business to the magnificent building at the northern end of Albemarle Street, which an expert has lately described as "the finest exemplification to be found in London of the application of the highest architectural and decorative designs to commercial premises." It was at Garrards that Frederick Prince of Wales and his Consort, the three Dukes of Cumberland, George III. and Queen Charlotte, King George IV. and his five brothers, King William IV. and Queen Adelaide, Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra, purchased both plate and jewellery. The great Duke of Wellington went to Garrards to set the first facet of the Koh-I-Noor for cutting, and the Royal Crowns, both in 1901 and 1911, were either made or arranged at Garrards. The Imperial Crown used at the Delhi Durbar of December 7th, 1911, was also designed and made by the Crown Jewellers.

Not only will the "HISTORY OF GARRARDS" contain a narrative of the artistic achievements of this great firm during many generations, but it will provide its readers with a very interesting account of the two great London thoroughfares which are associated with it, viz. the Haymarket and Albemarle Street.

Godoy, the Queen's Favourite. EDMUND B. D'AUVERGNE. Author of "The Coburgs," "A Queen at Bay," "Lola Montez," etc. Demy 8vo, illustrated, 16s. net.

A romance of the old Spanish Court. Godoy, the son of a poor country gentleman, had no fortune but his handsome face. This was enough to captivate Maria Luisa, the wife of King Charles IV., a woman comparable in some respects with Catherine II. of Russia. Strange to say, her lover secured an empire over her husband, which lasted till his dying day. Entrusted with the government, Godoy was called upon to contend against no less a foe than Napoleon himself, and for twenty years he held France at bay. Overthrown at last by the odious heir-apparent, afterwards Ferdinand VII., the fallen favourite became a prisoner in the hands of the French at Bayonne. He followed his master and mistress into exile, and died poor and neglected forty years after. His career was one of the most romantic that history affords. The book is largely based on unpublished official documents.

In Jesuit Land: The Jesuit Missions at Paraguay. W. H. KOEBEL

Author of "In the Maoriland Bush," "Madeira, Old and New," "Portugal, Past and Present," etc. Demy 8vo, fully illustrated.

The story of the Jesuit missions of Paraguay as told here, forms one of the most fascinating chapters in the complex history of the River Plate Provinces. Mr. Koebel has traced the work of the missions from their inception in the early days of Spanish South American colonisation and discovery, down to the final expulsion of the Jesuits by Bucareli in the middle of the eighteenth century. It is a story of deep interest, often of breathless excitement, and is, at the same time, a close and intimate study of the devoted men, who gave all, even to life itself, to their work; through the story runs a vein of political intrigue which heightens its fascination.

Princess and Queen: The Life and Times of Mary II. MARY F. SANDARS

Author of "Balzac, his Life and Writings."

The only English biography of Mary II. is the one written by Miss Agnes Strickland in her "Lives of the Queens of England," and this work is wholly unfair to the Queen. Since then much fresh information has come to light. In 1880, Countess Bentinck published part of Queen Mary's private diary, and in 1886 Dr. Doebner produced other portions of it. These two books give a unique opportunity for an appraisement of the Queen, who confided her most secret thoughts to her precious Memoirs, which she carried on her person in times of danger. Moreover, the writer has visited the Hague, and studied the archives there, where she received much valuable assistance from Dr. Kramer, author of a Dutch Life of Queen Mary. By the kindness of the Duke of Portland she has also had access to the unpublished letters at Welbeck, and through Lord Bathurst to a number of unpublished letters of the Queen to her most intimate friends.

The Love Affairs of the Vatican. Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport. Author of "Royal Lovers," "Mad Majesties," "Leopold II.," etc. In demy 8vo, handsome cloth gilt, with photogravure plates and numerous other illustrations, printed on art paper, 16s. net.

The history of Rome and the Popes has often been treated in an exhaustive manner, but there is scarcely any authoritative work dealing with the more intimate side of the affairs of the Vatican. Dr. A. S. Rappoport, who has made a special study of the lighter side of history, and especially of the influence exercised by the favourites of kings and queens upon the politics of nations, endeavours to show the important part played by the favourites of the Popes in the history of the Vatican and Christianity. As an impartial historian this author draws attention to the discrepancy existing between the noble and sublime teaching of Christ and the practice of his followers. Beginning with the earliest history of the Bishops of Rome, who soon became the spiritual rulers of Christendom, he deals with the morality of the priests and the various love affairs of the Popes. The words of the prophet, "and the women rule over us," may literally be applied to the history of the Papacy during the middle ages and the Renaissance. For not only were such famous courtesans as Theodora and Marozia the actual rulers of the Vatican, and in possession of the Keys of Heaven, but a woman one day ascended the throne of St. Peter and became Pope. The author further relates the story of Pope Alexander VI. and Signora Venozza, of Pope Leo X. and a French Court beauty, of Sixtus V. and the beautiful English heretic Anna Osten, of Innocent X. and his sister-in-law Olympia, and of many other Popes. Dr. Rappoport is a philosopher as well as a master of light biographical literature, and unobtrusively he teaches a lesson and draws a moral. Whilst exposing the intrigues of the Papal Court, he does justice to such Popes as were worthy Vicars of Christ.

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Cesare Borgia, the most conspicuous figure in Italy's most conspicuous age, has hitherto been no more than a figure of romance, a villain of melodrama, and such conceptions as there are of him are vaguely of a splendid criminal, based upon the fictions of Hugo and Dumas. It is time we knew more of the prototype of "The Prince" of Machiavelli, and singular that in an age of historical biographies so amazing a subject should for so long have been neglected by the historian.

Mr. Rafael Sabatini has undertaken the task of telling this tremendous and picturesque story. Ruthless, swift and terrific does Cesare Borgia appear in the pages of this engrossing biography, yet a man of sound judgment, as just as he was merciless—too just, indeed, for mercy—a subtle statesman and a military genius.

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The France of Joan of Arc.

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No period of French history is richer in the material of romance than that immediately preceding and synchronous with the time of Joan of Arc, and Colonel Haggard has made excellent use of that material in this, the latest volume from his pen. His picture of the France of Joan of Arc glows with colour and is full of startling light and shade effects. Colonel Haggard not only vividly realises in this book a very engaging Maid of Orleans, but he also traces those earlier historical developments, a knowledge of which is indispensable to a true understanding of the position which history assigns to Joan of Arc. He shows how, before the advent of "la Pucelle," France was torn by civil strife, her king, Charles VI., beloved but imbecile, powerless to defend his kingdom, and his powerful vassals, the Seigneurs, intent only on personal gain. Colonel Haggard traces the origin and progress of that bloody and long-drawn-out quarrel, known as that of the Armagnacs and the Burgundians, and shows how the crafty king Henry V. of England took advantage of the turmoil to snatch the throne of France.

A glittering procession of historical figures is revealed in Colonel Haggard's volume, Philippe le Hardi, Jean sans Peur, Philippe le Bon, the three famous Dukes of Burgundy; Louis d'Orleans; the Comte Bernard d'Armagnac, Charles VI., and Isabeau, his unfaithful consort; Charles VII., and Yolande, his intriguing mother-in-law; these and many other noted personages play their part in the moving drama of which the central figure is Joan of Arc, whose human and pathetic story is told fully in Colonel Haggard's pages from the early days at Dom-Remy down to the trial and execution.

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His life contains no great incidents and no great upheavals, but is made up of entertaining little things, many friendships, and a passion for poetry. He was closely in touch with Boileau, Racine and Molière, and his story must therefore appeal to all students of a remarkable period of French literary history.

Among the women of his circle were the gay niece of Mazarin, Mme. la Duchesse de Bouillon; the hysterical and devout Madame, wife of Gaston d'Orléans, the actress La Champmeslé, and his particular benefactress, Mme. de la Sablière. To these and other kind friends he was indebted for the ease and luxury he loved. Great child of genius that he was, he might have cried in the words of another writer, "Oh, why cannot we all be happy and devote ourselves to play?"

The Royal Miracle: A Garland of unpublished or very Rare Tracts, Broadsides, Letters, Prints and other Rariora concerning the Wanderings of Charles II. after the Battle of Worcester (September 3—October 15, 1651), with an Historical Introduction and Bibliography, together with some account of the Commemorative Pilgrimage of September 3—9, 1911. A. M. BROADLEY. Author of "Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale," "Chats on Autographs," "Napoleon in Caricature," etc. In demy 8vo, cloth gilt, fully illustrated, with portraits, maps, etc., from rare originals, 16s. net.

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The writer describes the *fiestas*, the religious ceremonies, the native dances, the Gallegan music, the theatre, and many customs of the people, who in many ways resemble the Irish Celts to whom they are allied by race. She has visited not only the towns, but has lived in the homes of the peasants in remote villages where English speaking people have seldom been seen.

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Mr. Lewis Melville, who has already written much on the eighteenth century, has brought to the production of this book a full knowledge of the work of his predecessors, to which he has added the results of his own investigations and not a little information inaccessible to earlier writers. This has enabled him to correct old errors and chronicle newly-established facts, and so to make his work the most complete and accurate account of the life, and the fullest collection of the letters of this great humourist.

Like the immortal Pepys, Sterne had a weakness for the 'sex'; and not the least important among the letters Mr. Melville has collected are those which Sterne addressed to the women with whom he so ardently philandered. Lord Basing has kindly permitted the use of all the letters of Mrs. Draper, written from India, in his possession. Sterne was a lover rather of woman than of women, and, as his biographer points out, while he dallied with many women he devoted himself exclusively to none. His philanderings were confined, Mr. Melville concludes from the evidence available, to an intellectual sensuality or sentimentality. There is a delightful note of frankness and self-revelation in Sterne's letters, and throughout his two volumes Mr. Melville has been careful to let the author of "Tristram Shandy" speak for himself. The work has been produced in a manner in every way worthy of the standard position it will naturally take.

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At the present day the house of Saxe-Coburg Gotha occupies the thrones of England, Belgium and Bulgaria, as it occupied till last year that also of Portugal. It is allied to almost every reigning family in Christendom. Less than a hundred years ago it was absolutely unknown outside the confines of its tiny German duchy. After a glance at the early history of this remarkable family, Mr. d'Auvergne tells the story of its rapid rise to greatness. He shows how the cadets of the house won the hands of queens and princesses, and by what arts they made themselves indispensable to European diplomacy. With absolute frankness he discusses the position of the Prince Consort towards his wife's subjects, and traces the influence of the Coburgs on European policy for nearly a century. He is the first historian to attribute the Franco-German War to the restless ambition of the Portuguese branch of the family—a startling conclusion which he brings new facts to support. This book is at once an important contribution to contemporary history, and a fascinating and intimate account of the relations of the greatest personages of our own time.

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The most powerful story Miss Arabella Kenealy has written. It is at the same time a passionate love story, and a profound study in the psychology of emotions. Here are two men, opposite as the poles in temperament and *morale*, the ascetic Anglican priest, and the "woman-hunter" of the title, man of the world and libertine. Both are in love with Nerissa, the charming heroine; one is her husband. The theme of the book is the widely-differing effects on temperament and conduct which result from love in these two widely-differing men. The one, the ascetic priest, concerned for his soul's salvation, fights his passion for his young bride as a deadly and besetting sin; the other comes by way of his passion to regeneration. An adept in the conquest of women, he brings all his powers to the siege of the beautiful unhappy wife, wooing her in every mood and tense, ringing the changes of his wooing through strategy, and bribery and temptation, through force of mastery, through guile and wile and passionate assault, and so at last to love, profound and true. The story, though eminently modern, is picturesquely set in a romantic old tower.

The Consort. MRS. EVERARD COTES (SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN). Author of "The Burnt Offering," "Cousin Cinderella," "The Path of a Star," etc.

The story of a little man married to a great woman, of their relations and interactions, their battles and despairs, written round the strong and familiar interests of passion and power and politics. The story moves at a gallop, and it is for the reader to meditate and moralise when the book is laid aside.

The Villa Mystery. HERBERT FLOWERDEW

Author of "The Second Elopement," "The Third Wife," etc.

Another of those psychological-sensational romances which Herbert Flowerdew has made a speciality of his own. Woven in with the mystery of a crime as baffling as anything imagined by Gaboriau, the pretty love story of Esmond Hare and Elsa Armandy engages the reader's sympathy from the moment of their first meeting. This is in a lonely country road, at midnight, where Elsa is on her knees picking up handfuls of sovereigns that do not exactly belong to her, and the atmosphere of mingled mystery and romance continues to surround their moving and unconventional love story up to the moment of its happy ending.

Prince and Priest. BERYL SYMONS

Author of "A Lady of France."

Readers fortunate in having read this author's stirring novel 'A Lady of France' will appreciate this new romance of mediæval France, which contains atmosphere, colour, life and movement. 1207 is the date when the story opens. Count Bertrand de Crein falls in love with the beautiful Lady Rosamund, whom he is escorting to the Lord of Gervandan in Toulouse, whose wife she is to be. In the meantime the Count of Toulouse is threatened with Rome's curse and an armed crusade to put down heresy. In the subsequent siege and sack of Beziers, Rosamund's husband is killed, and the love of Rosamund and de Crein culminates in marriage. The book is full of excitement, adventure, thrilling escapes, and heart-stirring romance.

Brass Faces. CHARLES MCEVOY

An exciting modern story of grip and power, some of the most startling episodes of which concern the kidnapping of a girl who has been turned out of house and home by her father and imprisoned in a house in Kensington. She is rescued by a bachelor, who in turn finds himself in a delicate position. An American female detective plots his arrest and ruin. The story rushes on in a whirl of excitement through a maze of plots and counterplots to a dramatic *dénouement.*

The Meteoric Benson. VINCENT MILLS-MALET

A decidedly new note has been struck in this most readable and interesting novel. As the name indicates it is an aeroplane story, and one of those rare books which must be read at a sitting; incident follows incident in ever-increasing interest, until the reader, breathless from excitement, learns from the last page "what really did happen."

Who Did It? — Headon Hill

Author of "Troubled Waters."

The principal theme of this volume is the abnormal astuteness of the Conductor of a railway restaurant-car, whose powers of observation and deduction enables him to solve the many absorbing "mysteries" that come under his ken, and which, as a preventer and detector of crime, put him on a par with any of the great puzzle-readers of fiction. Mr. Headon Hill goes direct to the point, and carries the reader rapidly along from the first page to the last.

A Robin Hood of France. — Michael W. Kaye

Hated at court and falsely accused of murder, the young Sieur de Pontenac flees to the Forest of Fontainebleau, and becomes the leader of a band of robbers (King Mandrin), beloved of the oppressed canaille, but hated of the nobles, whom he defies and robs. Claire d'Orgiuel, the only child of the Comte d'Orgiuel, having lost heavily at cards, wagers the winner—who has her in his power, and who hopes to force her to marry him—that she will lure "King Mandrin" into the power of his enemies; but, arriving in the Forest of Fontainebleau, ends in falling in love with the "Robin Hood of France."

Neighbours of Mine. — R. Andom

Author of "We Three and Troddles," "In Fear of a Throne," etc.
With 60 original illustrations.

This broadly farcical story of types and incidents of suburban life will afford as much amusement as the famous "Troddles" books which have in volume form successfully appealed to something like 200,000 readers of all classes, and should prove as popular with those who like a rollicking story. Now and again the author conveys a moral, discreetly, but generally he is content to be extravagantly amusing in depicting adventures, which are sufficiently out of the ordinary to be termed "singular." The book is cleverly and amusingly illustrated throughout the text by a popular artist, who has admirably succeeded in catching the drollery of the narrative.

The Loves of Stella. — Mrs. Shiers-Mason

Stella O'Donovan, a very poor but also very beautiful and quite unsophisticated Irish girl, lives in an old castle on a lovely but lonely Bay on the Irish coast. She has Spanish blood in her veins, and much of the impulsive and fascinating temperament of the Andalusians. Becoming heiress to a million of money, she decides to go to London and enter Society. Before her departure, a young Norwegian sculptor, Olaf Johansen, of striking appearance, comes to reside in the village. He at once falls in love with Stella, who returns his affection, but who, doubtful of herself, flees to London. Here she appears to meet Olaf again, but it is his twin brother impersonating him. Stella at once succumbs to his love-making, and many highly dramatic scenes follow.

Every Dog His Day.

HAROLD AVERY

Author of "A Week at the Sea," etc.

Basil Relaver and Angela kiss in a garden at Avesbury, youthful and innocent lovers. Circumstances divide them. Basil is whirled away into the vortex of commercial life and spends some years building up business and making himself a position. Prospering, he revisits Avesbury to learn from Helen Sutherly, Angela's aunt, that Angela, proud and independent, lives in London and earns her own livelihood as a secretary. They meet and misunderstand. Helen Sutherly intervenes, but the lovers are again about to part when they meet once more in the old garden and "love awakens and does not wake in vain." It is a pleasant, quiet story which grows in interest as it proceeds, and leaves a sense of satisfaction in the mind of the reader when it is finished.

The Long Hand.

SIR WILLIAM MAGNAY, BART.

Author of "Red Chancellor," "Count Zarka" and "A Prince of Lovers."

The setting of the story is Bavaria at the end of the 18th century, when that very remarkable, but now almost forgotten genius, Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford, was for a short time actually Regent of Bavaria, and was standing forth as the saviour of Munich, threatened at once by the French and Austrian armies. At this juncture a young English traveller arrives in that city, and by chance is drawn into a tragic adventure, being mistaken by an emissary of vengeance for a young officer who has given offence at Court, and whom the "long hand" of royalty is seeking to clutch. This episode proves to be but the first of many exciting adventures, and from it is developed a love interest which becomes the engrossing theme of the story. Readers who have enjoyed the Author's previous novels will find no falling off in this, his latest novel of the same genre, which offers a feast of romance and stirring adventure.

Exotic Martha.

DOROTHEA GERARD

Author of "The City of Enticement," "A Glorious Lie," etc.

Martha Grant, betrothed to a Dutchman whom she has met at an Alpine health resort, but who resides in Java, arrives at Batavia to find her lover married to another woman. Rather than face the humiliation of a return to her Scotch home she engages herself as a lady's maid to an invalid Dutchwoman. Suspected of poisioning her mistress, she is condemned to penal servitude for life. Effecting her escape, with the aid of an eccentric French doctor, who is the real, though unsuspected, poisoner, she is on the point of yielding to the advances of her rescuer, when George Pether, the friend of her girlhood, appears upon the scene, and in his company "exotic Martha"—quite cured of an ill-regulated passion for the tropics—regains her native land.

The Cardinal. NEWTON V. STEWART
Author of "A Son of the Emperor," "Across the Gulf," etc.

An historical story of Italian life in the 13th century, the time of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, when the Pope and Emperor with their factions were opposed. Ottaviano Maldini is the cardinal. He is all-powerful in Rome, and more of a soldier and a statesman than a churchman. Ariadne, the heroine, is a princess who is kidnapped and falls into the hands of the Moors. She is an exquisite little creature and her dancing uniquely beautiful, but she deliberately lames herself to escape harem life. She is offered as a slave to the cardinal, who out of pity buys her. With the cardinal she is happy, interest and affection develope into passionate love between them, and in the end Ariadne dies by her own hand, and relieves the cardinal of the embarrassment of her presence. It is an intensely interesting romance, and presents a lively and accurate picture of the times.

The Qualities of Mercy. CECIL ADAIR
Author of "The Dean's Daughter," "Cantacute Towers," etc.

The Mercy of the Qualities is a girl who, having inherited property, is free from the necessity which often leads to marriage, for which she is temperamentally disinclined. Captain Dare, whose little kinsman Colin is Mercy's friend, has other views, but Mercy will have none of him, and in pique he marries Alys, a timid little friend of Mercy's, who runs away from him and is hidden by the vicar's wife. Mercy and Colin swear eternal friendship; the latter has no desire to marry and perpetuate the house of Dare. Dare is found dead, a victim of the vendetta. The wholesome story is full of interesting ingredients—Riches, High Place, lovely Country, Beautiful Weather, some Excitement, and Mystery.

The Unholy Estate; or, the Sins of the Fathers.
DOUGLAS SLADEN Author of "A Japanese Marriage," "The Admiral," "The Tragedy of the Pyramids," etc.

This is a present-day story of strong domestic interest. The problem which Mr. Douglas Sladen treats is the unhappiness inflicted by unsuitable marriages and the inconveniences which beslege those who defy the marriage convention and take their lives into their own hands

The story lies on the fringe of politics. An eminent political personage, thinly veiled, occupies a prominent position in it. He supplies one of the main elements in the book, and the other is supplied by a woman of great position who gives up everything for the man she loves and is content to live cut off from society for his sake.

The book differs from most books which deal with the same subject in the fact that neither party, in spite of straitened means and social ostracism, exhibits any remorse or regret. They are completely satisfied with what they have done. They live a simple life and their love match is an unequivocal success. The unexpected dénouement of the story is a happy one.

Hodson's Voyage. —W. H. KOEBEL

Author of "In the Maoriland Bush," with 8 original illustrations on art paper by Fred Pegram.

This is a work of light humour from the pen of Mr. W. H. Koebel, better known of recent years as a travel writer of distinction, but who in taking up fiction again is returning to his first love. The plot deals with the trials of a commercial traveller on board a liner. He is mistaken for a country officer whom he resembles, and the complications that ensue include a love interest, and give rise to a rapid series of situations that contain frank elements of farce, especially when the hero finds that fragments of the past history of his military prototype are known to others and not to himself. The climax of the story arises when it is imperative that he should reveal his identity, and when he finds it impossible to convince his companions that circumstances have compelled him to act the lie. The book abounds in situations, and much amusement arises from the bewildering happenings of the unexpected. The fate of the unfortunate victim hangs in the balance until the last page.

The Baron of Ill Fame. HESTER BARTON

This story gives a faithful picture of Florence in the time of Dante. Besides Corso Donati, the hero of Campaldino, Dante and his wife; Giotto, the great artist; Giano della Bella, the popular demagogue, and other Florentines known to history, figure in the novel. The period dealt with was a stirring and brutal one, yet amid the clash of steel, the flow of blood, the hoarse yells of mutual hatred, the orgies of illicit passion, the violation of convents, the sacking and burning of towns, men and women plighted troth even as to-day, and the author of this romance of mediæval Florence has unified her graphic descriptions of historical incidents by a love story all the more idyllic because of the background of vice and crime.

Duckworth's Diamonds. E. EVERETT-GREEN

Author of "Clive Lorimer's Marriage," "The Lady of the Bungalow," etc.

Duckworth has entrusted a haul of diamonds to his friend, Dermot Fitzgerald, who brings them to England to await instructions. He is aware that he is shadowed by one, Pike, and gets Hilton, a friend of his, to come over to Ireland and advise him. Hilton advises him to bring the treasure and hide it in his own caves of Treversal. This they do, though not without adventure. In a little village, close to Treversal, stands a small cottage to which Barbara Quentin has retired on the death of her millionaire father, whose assets appear to be nil, and whose child is unprovided for. She lives in the cottage with a friend, making acquaintance with Hilton and Dermot. Later on, Phyllis Duckworth is drawn into the web of fate, and comes also to the cottage. Letters come ostensibly from Duckworth, demanding the surrender of the treasure to his sister; but Phyllis deems these forgeries, and Dermot holds on. In the end and in the nick of time, Duckworth himself turns up; there is a raid upon the caves of Treversal, but the villains are caught and arrested, and various pairs of lovers are made happy.

A Passion in Morocco.

CHARLOTTE CAMERON

Author of "A Woman's Winter in South America."

The story opens on board a P. & O. steamer when it is ploughing its way steadily towards the Moroccan coast. A beautiful English girl, duly chaperoned, makes the acquaintance of a handsome Moorish prince who is returning to his native land after passing through the curriculum at Oxford, with the varied problems of East and West seeking solution in his mind. The presence of the girl presses one of these questions irresistibly to the forefront of his consideration. At Mazagan the ladies are invited by an officers' guide to visit the harem of the Kaid, where the beautiful English girl, separated from the party, is trapped by the wily owner, from whose hands she is duly rescued, at the eleventh hour, by Mohammed el Yumar, the Moorish Prince. Many adventures follow—amid strange scenes are enacted against a background of vivid Oriental colour, and in the end East and West effect a union, finding that "love levels all."

The Lotus Lantern.

MARY IMLAY TAYLOR

Author of "The Reaping," "The Impersonator," "My Lady Clancarty," etc.

A love story of great charm and dramatic power, whose scene is laid in Japan of to-day. Lieut. John Holland, a military attaché of the British Embassy, and betrothed to the daughter of the British Ambassador, while witnessing the Buddhist festival of lanterns, symbolizing ships of the souls of the dead, meets Umé-San, who had been sold by her relatives and had become a Geisha girl in a Tokyo tea garden. A plot has been formed to place her in the power of an unscrupulous and cruel Japanese prince. Holland's sympathy is first enlisted, and finally he falls passionately in love with the little Japanese girl, pure, sweet, and devout, notwithstanding her surroundings. The story moves with dramatic force, is filled with interest from the opening chapter to the end, and Umé (flower of the plum) is one of the tenderest and dearest heroines of fiction.

Damosel Croft.

R. MURRAY GILCHRIST

Author of "The Courtesy Dame," "The Two Goodwins," "The Firstborn," etc.

The heroine of this book is the last of a wealthy yeoman family in the High Peak Country; the hero is a young man from Yorkshire, of equal social standing but comparatively insignificent means. Janey Maskrey is beloved by three; her choice falls at last upon the most fitting suitor, with whom, without being aware of the fact, she has been in love for some considerable time. An author of distinguished reputation—akin to the Maskreys—presents with his curious entourage a remarkable contrast. Several old-world country-scenes, notably the Carrying of the Garland at Castleton, are presented with a wealth of colour. The book is full of sunlight, of happiness and of country mirth.

The Doll: A Happy Story. VIOLET HUNT

Author of "White Rose of Weary Leaf," "The Wife of Altamount."

This is a story of a woman who, having been divorced once, and having lost control of her child, invents a stratagem by which, upon her re-marriage, she thinks she will be protected from a second loss of her child should she again be divorced. How the stratagem fails and how the first child that she had lost comes into her life again, and how in the end, though her stratagem has failed, she is successful all along the line owing to the employment of purely feminine weapons, it is the purpose of this novel to show.

A Prisoner in Paradise. H. L. VAHEY

The scenes of this story are enacted in the Malay Islands and Singapore. A British agent, after years of residence on the South Sea Islands, pines for civilization, and decides to quit. The appearance of a beautiful half-caste reconciles him to remaining. Complications with the natives arise, and flight becomes the only safety of the lovers. They fly by different routes, and the man arrives at Singapore, where the vessel carrying the woman is reported lost with all hands. The tie that bound him to the Malays thus broken, he seeks the solaces of civilisation by marrying a widow. Disillusioned, after two months he quarrels with the widow, and ships back to barbarism. Unexpectedly, he finds the Malay wife returned and awaiting him, and considers himself absolved from his recent unsuccessful marriage. The book is said to possess something of the glitter and colour of Conrad's tropical tales.

When Satan took Flesh. A. J. ANDERSON

Author of "The Romance of Fra Filippo Lippi," etc.

In this story Satan takes flesh that he may plot a second Fall. By means of Clairvoyance he bargains for possession of a young man's body, and discovers in the doctrine of the limitation of the family a new and powerful temptation by which to wreck the human race. Mr. Anderson writes with sincerity of purpose and has a thorough knowledge of his subject, and his story is worthy of the careful attention of every thoughtful mind.

The Children of Alsace. RENÉ BAZIN

Author of "The Nun," "Redemption," etc,

A story of Alsace full of this famous Author's penetrative charm. It is of Alsace conquered, of those who remain loyal to France and those who compromise with the victors. Obeile is the name of a prominent Alsatian family, the head of which goes over to the winning side. Love complications arise among the younger members of the family, such as occurred in English History in the time of the Cavaliers and Roundheads. The atmosphere of Alsace under the new government is skilfully reproduced, and the conflict of racial feeling engendered admirably portrayed. The story is full of interest and excitement, and has the added charm of historical accuracy.

Between Two Stools. RHODA BROUGHTON

Author of "Red as a Rose is She," "Cometh up as a Flower," etc.

This story deals with the situation of a man and woman—he single, she married, who have had a liaison of ten years' duration, while the woman's husband has been lying hopelessly crippled by an accident which happened before the opening of the narrative. The interest lies in the effect upon their characters, and in the emotions of hope, fear and remorse which agitate them. The situation is complicated by the apprehensions aroused by suspicion that the heroine's half-grown daughter divines something of the truth. The introduction of an unmarried girl to the hero entangles the knot still further—a knot which is untied only on the last page.

Camilla Forgetting Herself. H. L. VAHEY

Author of "A Prisoner in Paradise."

Novels which 'lift one out of oneself,' which are not gloomy or sordid, and are not concerned with matrimonial failures, 'problems,' and the seamy side of marital life, are none too common; so that the refreshing and stimulating story of 'the incurably romantic' Camilla and her lover-husband will be hailed with delight by those who have not come to look upon marriage as a 'doubtful adventure characterized by the total surrender of freedom.' It is a humorous, 'lovey' and wholesome story, without a 'sugary flavour.' From the first page to the last line—in which Camilla tells her husband 'a great secret'—there is a spirit of Joy and Happiness pervading the book. To those of us who are still sufficiently old-fashioned to have matrimonial ideals, and a genuine belief in the existence of enduring, all-conquering love, Camilla will make a strong appeal. Though written in a light, bantering vein, the story contains an idea—a great idea, it may be—which is nothing more or less than a plea for *real* marriages; made in Heaven or otherwise, but founded, not upon legal forms, conventions and sacrifices, but upon a union of hearts. To those who found the psychology of Mr. Vahey's last book, 'A Prisoner in Paradise' (Stanley Paul) too strong, the present volume will come as a pleasant surprise.

The Bride of Love. KATE HORN

Author of "Edward and I and Mrs. Honeybun," "Mulberries of Daphne," "The White Owl," "Lovelocks of Diana," "Ships of Desire," etc.

A love romance full of the charm which won for "Edward and I and Mrs. Honeybun" so many admirers. Psyche is a delightful heroine, whose face is her fortune. The story tells how Psyche and her little sister, Pomander, under trying circumstances battle their way to success, and will interest all who know what it is to cherish ideals which lie outside the sphere of their environment, and who ultimately win their own reward.

The Marriage of Lenore.

ALICE M. DIEHL

Author of "A Mysterious Lover," etc.

Lenore has married more than once, and thereby hang numerous complications. Her first husband is an elderly roue, and the second, who is present at her first marriage, restores to her the bouquet which she drops, and in this act and its recognition eyes and souls meet. There is a rumour that the first husband was a bigamist. Thereupon Lenore marries her second, only to find that her first husband's *mésalliance* was no marriage and that she herself has committed bigamy. The old husband dies, and so matters are set right. The story flows on through troubles and distractions, raptures and pains, to its happy ending.

God Disposes.

PELLEW HAWKER

A novel of quick changes, rapid movements, and striking dramatic situations, which opens with the description of a dead man sitting at his library table, his hand resting on his cheque book. The surreptitious visitor who makes the discovery secures the cheque book, forges the dead man's signature, and succeeds in cashing a cheque for a large amount. On the strength of the money he poses as a rich man, pushes himself into country society, and wins the heart of Lady Angela Dawson, who is affianced to Viscount Woolmer, the son and heir of Lord Bletchford, and the elder brother of the dead man. Later he claims to be the heir to the property, but in due course is discovered and exposed. The characterisation is good, the narrative interesting and the *dénouement* all that can be desired.

The Watch Night.

HENRY BETT

A story of adventure in the exciting years of 1741-1746. The hero, when a young man in London, comes under the influence of Whitefield and Wesley, and joins the Methodists. Later he becomes involved in Jacobite plots in Lincolnshire and Northumberland, and falls in love with a lady who is acting as one of the Pretender's agents in England. The Jacobites suspect that he is a spy upon them, and he is kidnapped and carried to Holland. There his life is attempted, and he learns that the English Government has offered a reward for his apprehension. Since he cannot return, he journeys to the borders of Bohemia to visit Herrhut, the headquarters of the Moravian Brethren. Here he finds himself in the midst of the second Silesian war. He sees Frederick the Great, and meets the heroine once more unexpectedly at Dresden. It would be unfair to unravel the complex plot with all its surprises, it will suffice to say that while this is a lively narrative of love, intrigue, and adventure which hurries the reader on from page to page, it is also a serious attempt, the first in English fiction, to give a faithful picture of the life of the Eighteenth Century Moravians and Methodists. There are vivid glimpses of many famous men, especially John Wesley.

A Woman with a Purpose. ANNA CHAPIN RAY

With coloured frontispiece by Frank Snapp.

In characterization, in dramatic force, and in artistic treatment this is the best story Miss Ray has yet written. It deals with the married life of a strong, successful, self-willed man of affairs to a girl who has tried to support herself by her pen, and in failing has retained her high ideals and her respect for her own opinions. The story is so full of the life of to-day that it stirs our emotions while it delights us with its absorbing plot. People of rare quality and reality are portrayed, vital problems are inspiringly handled, and a love story of power and originality is developed to its logical conclusion.

Love's Old Sweet Song. CLIFTON BINGHAM

Mr. Clifton Bingham, who, thirty years ago, wrote the words of the famous song bearing this title, which is known and sung all the world over, has in this new novel—the first he has written—woven his sympathetic verses into a most interesting and human story, both dramatic and pathetic. Though containing only five characters (excepting the dog) it touches lightly and tenderly the chords of human life in a manner that will appeal, as in Molloy's song, to every heart. It is a book that will be appreciated by everyone who has heard or sung "Just a Song at Twilight, when the Lights are Low," and should make an appropriate gift book to lovers of music.

The Activities of Lavie Jutt. MARGUERITE and ARMIGER BARCLAY. Author of "The Kingmakers," "The Worsleys," etc.

Lavie, the heiress of a millionaire, is taken into society—for a handsome consideration. She is resourceful as well as charming, and when she falls in love with the impecunious Lord Loamington, who keeps a hat shop, she is able to tender very valuable advice. But Lavie is not satisfied with talking; she is full of activity and inventiveness, and she "makes things hum." This story of her many activities is bright and out of the common.

Opal of October. JOY SHIRLEY

For those born in the month of October, the opal is said to be a lucky stone, and this novel is based upon the assumption that it is so. It is a story of the times of the soothsayers and the witches, when people were all more or less trying to discover the philosopher's stone which turns everything to gold. The witch in this case is a young girl of great beauty, who narrowly escapes the stake.

The Mystery of Red Marsh Farm. ARCHIBALD H. MARSHALL. Author of "The Squire's Daughter," "Exton Manor," etc.

This novel deals with the mysterious disappearance of a child, who is heir to a property consisting of an old Manor House and a large marshland farm, which has been in the family for generations. Many people are concerned in the mystery, and suspicion falls first on one, then on the other, but the police fail to clear it up. The mystery is solved by a young squire who is in love with the sister of the missing child, but not until he has travelled half round the world in search of the solution.

Two Worlds: A Romance. LIEUT.-COL. ANDREW C. P. HAGGARD. Author of "The France of Joan of Arc," etc.

Colonel Andrew Haggard, so well known for his clever and amusing histories of French Court Life, is no less known as a novelist of distinction. In this story he introduces the reader to life in Vancouver Island, the scene opening in that gem of the Pacific, the beautiful city of Victoria. The heroine is a lovely young unbeliever, whose naturally generous and ardent temperament has become warped by the perusal of atheistic literature. The hero is a manly young Englishman, himself an agnostic but a seeker after the truth. They have some weird adventures in the realm of the occult. Then the scene changes to Europe, where we meet with a generous-minded and somewhat eccentric peer given to Christian Science, who has a great effect upon the subsequent development of the plot, and the many exciting incidents by land, sea and aeroplane with which this unusual romance is filled.

The Three Anarchists. MAUD STEPNEY RAWSON Author of "A Lady of the Regency," "The Stairway of Honour," "The Enchanted Garden," "The Easy-Go-Luckies," etc.

The Three, who dominate alike the romance of the world and the plot of this new story from the pen of the author of "The Enchanted Garden," are Love, Death, and Birth, and the title is based on a phrase in Mr. C. F. G. Masterman's fine volume of essays, "The Peril of Change." The puissance of this triumvirate is unfolded in the story of a simple woman, born nameless, and of no position, whose life, at first uneventful, is suddenly engulfed by social eminence, sensation, temptation and a dangerous love. The Three come to her aid in each crisis, and each leaves her stronger and more competent to hold the heritage of peace and happiness which eventually becomes hers.

Maids in Many Moods. H. LOUISA BEDFORD Author of "His Will and her Way."

This novel shows the feminine temperament and the feminine temper in its various and discordant phases, but it is a novel of incident rather than of psychological analysis, and will appeal to all who like a genuine unsophisticated love story.

The Second Woman. NORMA LORIMER

Author of "Josiah's Wife," "Mirry-Ann," "On Etna," and "The Pagan Woman," etc.

Tells of a woman married to a man younger than herself (not so much in years as in temperament), haunted by the fear of his awakening one day to the fact that his love for her has never been what he thought it was, but has only been affection. The plot is worked out on original lines, and the book is full of novel situations, unexpected complications and pungent dialogue.

Veeni the Master. R. FIFIELD LAMPORT

Readers and admirers of Marie Corelli's romances of the supernatural will find congenial excitement in following the fortunes of "Veeni the Master" in Mr. Lamport's romance of two worlds—the world Earth and the world Zan. The story of the dissolution of the world Earth is full of human interest, and that of the reincarnation in the world Zan is fired with real imaginative power. The book is full of surprises, in which love interest and passion play a prominent part. It should cause somewhat of a sensation.

Their Wedded Wife. ALICE M. DIEHL

Author of "The Marriage of Lenore," "A Mysterious Lover," etc.

This is the story of a tragic misunderstanding and its consequences. Nora le Geyt is happily married to Paul Wentworth, who adores her with a jealous adoration. Believing a slander against her, he leaves her. Years pass; Nora, believing him dead, marries again; then she discovers that Wentworth is still alive; she loves him still. With the skill of a deft artist Mrs. Diehl brings the story to a close on a note of happiness that will please the large and growing circle of her admirers.

Swelling of Jordan. CORALIE STANTON AND HEATH HOSKEN. Author of "Plumage," "The Muzzled Ox," etc.

Canon Oriel, an earnest worker in the East End, loved and respected, had, years before the story commences, while climbing with his friend Digby Cavan in Switzerland, found in the pocket of his friend's coat, which he had accidentally put on instead of his own, evidence that his friend had robbed his, the canon's, brother and been the cause of his committing suicide. Oriel in a struggle which took place between the two men hurled his friend from the precipice. Now the glacier gives up Cavan's rucksack, and any day it may yield up his body. To reveal subsequent developments would spoil the reader's enjoyment of a thrilling plot.

The Red Fleur De Lys. MAY WYNNE

Author of "Henri of Navarre," "Honour's Fetters," etc.

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